

# Chronology of Major Conflicts and Political Events

## January 2015

*France steps up security measures after a series of terrorist attacks, mainly against the satirical weekly magazine Charlie Hebdo. In Italy, Sergio Mattarella is elected as the new President of the Republic. In Croatia, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic wins the presidential elections. In Kosovo, there is unrest over the privatization of a mining complex. In FYROM, two controversial constitutional reforms are passed and precautionary measures are taken against the opposition Social Democratic party leader. In Greece, the far-left Syriza party wins the legislative elections. In Syria, the Kurdish forces and international coalition liberate Kobani. Lebanon is further destabilized and the government restricts entry for Syrians without visas. In Egypt, the court orders the retrial of the former President for embezzlement and violence erupts during the commemoration of the Revolution. Peace talks fail in Geneva between the two factions vying for power in Libya, against the backdrop of a rise in the presence of the Islamic State (Daesh) in the country. In Tunisia, Habib Essid tries to form a new government. Mauritania jails three anti-slavery activists.*

### Portugal

- On 6 January police raid the headquarters of Portugal Telecom on suspicion of fraud in connection with the company's ruinous investments in companies from the Espirito Santo group, which went bankrupt in late 2014.
- On 12 January, after 37 years in power, the President of Madeira Alberto Joao Jardim resigns, leaving the archipelago with 6.3 billion euros of debt.

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### Spain

- On 13 January the Supreme Court rules that prison sentences served by members of the terrorist group Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in any other EU country will not affect the maximum sentences handed down in Spain.
- On 22 January the former treasurer of the People's Party (PP, centre-right) Luis Barcenas is released after posting a 200,000-euro bail, following 19 months in custody for his involvement in the Gürtel corruption case.

### France

- On 7 January the French brothers Saïd and Cherif Kouachi burst into the offices of the satirical weekly Charlie Hebdo in Paris and kill 12 people. On 8-9 January another radical Islamist, Amedy Coulibaly, kills a police officer in Montrouge and bursts into a Jewish establishment in Porte de Vincennes taking a group of hostages. The three terrorists are shot dead by police.
- On 27 January five people are arrested in an anti-jihadist operation in Lunel, Languedoc-Roussillon.

### Monaco

- On 29 January around fifty employees of Robertshaw, a manufacturer of electrical components, protest in Fontvieille against the relocation of the company to the Czech Republic, which will result in 84 redundancies at the end of the year.

### Italy

- On 3 January 360 illegal immigrants were disembarked in Corigliano Calabro after being abandoned by the crew of the Sierra Leone-flagged ship Ezadeen. On 9 January more than 800 immigrants are intercepted in different operations.
- On 28 January the Senate approves the election reforms of Matteo Renzi's government, which foresees a 3% election threshold for parliamentary representation, a premium for the most voted party if they take more than 40% of the votes and a second round of elections if no party obtains 40% in the first round.
- On 31 January the Parliament elects the Democratic Party (PD, social democrat) candidate Sergio Mattarella, Constitutional Court judge and minister during the governments of Andreotti and D'Alema, as President of the Republic to replace Giorgio Napolitano, who on 14 January officially resigns citing his advanced age.

### Malta

- On 22 January a Maltese patrol boat rescues 80 migrants adrift in the seas around the island.

### Croatia

- On 11 January Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ, conservative) wins in the second round of the presidential elections with 50.74% of the votes. One of its first measures is to ask the UN to push for the Serbian politician Vojislav Seselj, a war crimes suspect released in 2014 due to poor health, to be returned to the custody of the Interna-

tional Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 16 January, following a 2013 order of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the Constitutional Court puts a stop to the release of two former members of the Bosnian-Serb forces during the Bosnian War, Milorad Trbic and Ante Kovac, pending their retrial for war crimes in Srebrenica and Vitez respectively, under the old Yugoslav criminal code in force when the crimes were committed.
- On 20 January the former Croatian general Branimir Glavas is provisionally released by Bosnia until Croatia passes a definitive sentence in his trial for crimes against Serb civilians in Osijek after, on 13 January, a Croatian court annuls the previous sentence against him, ordering a retrial due to procedural defects.
- On 23 January the Foreign Trade Minister Boris Tucic, from the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD, Serbian nationalist), resigns citing the government's decision to authorize the sale of Bosnian arms to the Ukrainian government, which continues to fight against the separatist revolution in Donbass.

#### *Serbia*

- On 30 January the ICTY hands down life sentences to senior officers of the Serbian army Vujadin Popovic and Ljubisa Beara and sentences three former officers of the Bosnian Serb army to 13, 18 and 35 years' imprisonment. These sentences mark the end, after nine years, of the longest trial for the Srebrenica massacre.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 19 January the government postpones the parliamentary vote on the partial privatization of the Treпча mining complex, partly located in North Kosovo and for which Serbia claims ownership. Serbia warns Pristina of the negative impact privatization would have for the normalization of bilateral relations. Daily

protests over the future of the complex intensify on 27 January leaving at least 37 people injured.

#### *FYROM*

- On 20 January the Parliament approves two constitutional reforms despite an opposition boycott: to open an international financial zone to attract investments and the definition of marriage as an exclusively heterosexual union.
- On 31 January the judicial authorities order Zoran Zaev, leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDSM), to remain in the country and confiscate his passport after being accused by the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski of spying and plotting a coup. Zaev had been threatening the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE, conservative) with the publication of information about a spy network involving more than 20,000 citizens that would bring down the government. The former head of secret services Zoran Verusevski is also arrested under the same charges.

#### *Albania*

- On 17-19 January Ardian Trota, the Kukës mafia boss, and Arben Sula, director of a prison near Tirana, are injured in a series of bomb attacks in Durres.

#### *Greece*

- On 2 January the founding assembly is held for the Movement of Democratic Socialists, a new party created by the former Prime Minister and former leader of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), George Papandreou.
- On 25 January Greece holds early legislative elections. With a 63.9% turnout, Syriza (far-left) wins taking 149 seats. Its leader Alexis Tsipras will be the new Prime Minister. New Democracy (ND, centre-right), the party of the outgoing Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, takes just 76 seats, down from 129, followed by the Golden Dawn (XA, neo-Nazi) with 17 seats; To Potami (TP, centre) 17 seats; the Communist Party (KKE) 15 seats; Inde-

pendent Greeks (ANEL, far-right) 13 seats; and PASOK 13 seats. On 28 January Tsipras forms a coalition government comprising Syriza and ANEL. The new ten-minister cabinet includes no women. Panos Kammenos (ANEL) takes over Defence; Yannis Dragasakis, Economy; Yanis Varoufakis, Finance and Nikos Kotzias, Foreign Affairs. The new government's first measure is the renegotiation of the Greek bailout package and the end of negotiations with the troika – the European Commission (EC), European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

#### *Turkey*

- On 20 January the Justice and Development Party's (AKP Islamist) parliamentary majority votes against sending four former ministers to stand trial who were involved in the corruption case uncovered in December 2013 and which affects the party.
- On 20 January 28 employees of the Telecommunications Directorate and government scientific research council Tübitak are arrested suspected of involvement in illegal wiretapping of senior state officials, in the AKP government's fight against the support network of the Islamist preacher Fethullah Gülen.

#### *Cyprus*

- On 9 January the Finance Minister Harris Georgiadis announces the immediate closure of Cyprus Airways, following the EU's decision to demand repayment of illegal state aid given to the airline since 2007.
- On 13 January Yiannakis Omirou, President of the Movement for Social Democracy (EDEK), resigns accusing the party of undermining his leadership.

#### *Syria*

- On 25 January Turkey opens the new Suruç refugee camp with a capacity for 35,000 Syrian refugees.
- On 26 January, after 132 days of siege, Kurdish forces, supported by the international coalition, take full control of Kobani from Islamic State (Daesh).

### Lebanon

- On 5 January the government imposes restrictions on the entry of Syrian citizens into Lebanon, after four years of civil war in Syria have made Lebanon home to 1.15 million refugees.
- On 10 January at least seven people are killed in a double suicide bomb attack in Jabal Mohsen, Tripoli. Spokesman for the Arab Democratic Party (PAD, Alawite) Abdel Latif Saleh says Daesh is responsible.
- On 23 January clashes between the Lebanese army and Syrian Islamist rebels leave at least three rebels dead and five soldiers injured in Ras Baalbek, on the Syrian border.

### Egypt

- On 13 January an appeals court annuls the three-year prison sentence handed down to Hosni Mubarak for embezzlement and orders a retrial.
- On 14 January Abdel Fattah el-Sisi issues a presidential decree to modify Law 1936 on Media and Communications and ban the sale of any publication deemed offensive to religion.
- On 22 January the Criminal Court in Cairo releases the sons of former President Hosni Mubarak, Alaa and Gamal, pending their retrial for misappropriation of public funds.
- On 24-25 January, during the commemoration of the Egyptian revolution, at least 18 people are killed, a further 50 are injured and more than 500 arrests are made in anti-government protests taking place in different cities.
- On 29 January Ansar Bait al-Maqdis, a terrorist group loyal to Daesh, claims responsibility for four terrorist attacks in the Sinai that leave at least 29 members of the security forces dead.

### Libya

- On 14 January new UN-brokered talks begin in Geneva between Libya's warring factions. On 16 January the parallel governments of Tobruk and Tripoli agree to cease hostilities and form a unity government. On 16-18 January the Islamist militias of the Tripoli government and the general command of the armed forces of the Tobruk government both

call unilateral ceasefires. On 19 January fighting is resumed. On 21 January the Tripoli government representatives leave the negotiations, which are resumed on 26 January.

- On 27 January Daesh in Tripolitania claims responsibility for its first attack in Tripoli, a car bomb outside the Corinthia Hotel which leaves 10 people dead.

### Tunisia

- On 5 January the former Interior Minister Habib Essid is chosen by the President Beji Caïd Essebsi to become Prime Minister and form a new government.
- On 23 January Habib Essid unveils the new government, which includes no members of the Islamist Ennahda party. On 25 January Ennahda, the second largest party in the Parliament, rejects the proposed cabinet.

### Algeria

- On 20 January the Justice Minister presents a bill that foresees tougher sentences for money laundering and financing terrorism and allows the authorities to monitor, freeze or seize funds suspected of financing terrorism.
- On 22 January the government ensures it will not cut government subsidies or suspend the planned minimum wage increase, despite a 41.7-billion-euro deficit forecast for the 2015 budget, due to the sharp fall in oil prices.

### Morocco

- On 30 January Mohammed VI puts an end to eleven months of diplomatic crisis with France when he travels to Paris to meet with the President François Hollande. The crisis dates back to February 2014, when Morocco suspended its judicial and anti-terrorist cooperation with France over a trial in Paris against Abdellatif Hammouchi, head of the General Directorate of Territorial Surveillance.

### Mauritania

- On 15 January Biram Dah Abeid, winner of the United Nations Human Rights Prize in 2013 and leader of the

Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement in Mauritania (IRA), Brahim Ould Bilal Ramdhane, vice-President of the IRA and Djiby Sow, President of the Union for Progress, are sentenced to two years' imprisonment.

### EU

- On 1 January Latvia assumes the presidency of the EU with the priorities to revitalize the Neighbourhood Policy, refocus relations with Russia and the negotiations with Moscow and Kiev over the conflict in eastern Ukraine, adopt measures to create sustainable youth employment and strengthen the European Digital Agenda.
- On 1 January Lithuania adopts the euro and becomes the nineteenth member country of the eurozone.
- On 28 January the EU Foreign Ministers renew sanctions against Russia for its support of the Ukrainian separatists despite the reluctance of the new Greek government.

### Arab League

- On 16 January the Arab League approves a plan presented by Palestine to submit a draft resolution to the United Nations Security Council that calls for a deal to end the Israeli occupation by the end of 2017.

### February 2015

*In Spain, the two main parties agree on an anti-terrorism pact. In France, the government survives a vote of no confidence and the Falciani List is published. In Italy, the government approves new anti-terror measures. In Malta, the Constitutional Court awards the main opposition party two additional seats in the Parliament. Greece reaches an agreement with the eurozone to extend its financial assistance programme. In Turkey, more arrests are made of supporters of the preacher Fethullah Gülen. Cyprus and Russia sign an agreement that gives Russian military ships access to Greek-Cypriot ports. In Syria, Kurdish troops continue their advance from Kobani. Jordan executes two Islamist prisoners in*

*retaliation for the execution of the pilot Moaz al-Kasasbeh. Egypt launches a new offensive against Daesh in Libya, where the political situation continues to deteriorate and UN-brokered talks between the Tobruk and Tripoli governments make no major advances. In Tunisia, a new government is formed.*

#### Portugal

- On 26 February Alfredo Barroso, one of the founders of the Socialist Party (PS), leaves the party after the party leader Antonio Costa declares that the country, currently governed by a centre-right coalition, is in a better situation now than four years ago, when the former socialist Prime Minister Jose Socrates was in power, who was jailed for corruption.

#### Spain

- On 4 February the People's Party (PP) and the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) sign a pact on the fight against Islamic terrorism.
- On 6 February Juan Carlos Monedero, third-in-command in the far-left party Podemos admits to tax fraud through the creation of a fictitious company in 2013 for invoicing 425,150 euros for work carried out for the governments of Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador.
- On 9 February Artur Mas becomes the first President of the Catalan government to appear before the regional parliament over evidence that points at his possible involvement in the corruption scandal surrounding the former Catalan President Jordi Pujol and his family.
- On 11 February the Secretary General of PSOE Pedro Sanchez sacks the leader of the party's Madrid branch Tomas Gomez over his possible involvement in a corruption scandal in Parla when he was the mayor there.
- On 26 February the Murcian Agriculture Minister Antonio Cerda resigns after being implicated in the Novo Carthago corruption case.

#### France

- On 5 February the Paris chief of police Bernard Petit is arrested for violating the secrecy of an inquiry in the investigation of conman Christophe Rocancourt.

- On 6 February Philippe Martinez becomes the new Secretary General of France's largest trade union, the General Confederation of Labour (CGT), after Thierry Lepaon's resignation on 6 January, following irregular expenses made since he assumed the post in 2013.
- On 9 February an international media investigation publishes the names of the so-called Falciani List, seven years after the systems engineer Hervé Falciani informed authorities of several countries in which 106,000 clients of the Swiss subsidiary of the Hong Kong-Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) used the entity to evade taxes amounting to 78 billion euros between 2006 and 2007.
- On 17 February the Prime Minister Manuel Valls passes the so-called Macron Law by decree, designed to liberalize the economy, thus avoiding a parliamentary vote. The decision leads the opposition to propose a confidence vote on 19 February, which the government survives.

#### Italy

- On 9 February a total of 300 immigrants have died in recent days trying to reach Italian shores. On 19 February the EC announces that it will step up assistance to Italy extending Operation Triton to the end of 2015 and awarding an additional 13.7 million euros.
- On 10 February the Council of Ministers approves the law decree toughening the anti-terrorism laws.

#### Malta

- On 5 February the Constitutional Court orders the Nationalist Party (PN Christian democracy) to be given two seats in Parliament due to errors found in the vote counting for the 2013 elections.

#### Croatia

- On 9 February the outgoing President Ivo Josipovic decorates Ejup Ganic, the Bosnian President during the Bosnian War, accused by Serbia of ordering the attack on Yugoslav troops in Sarajevo in 1992.
- On 9 February the public prosecutor's office withdraws an indictment

against two former Croatian police officers accused of war crimes committed during Operation Storm in 1995, citing shortcomings in Zagreb's handling of the case, where the public prosecutor Zeljka Pokupec hands in her resignation.

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 16 February nine-month-old Faruk Salaka becomes the first citizen to be registered with Bosnian nationality, 22 years after the country's independence, whose civil registry only allows people to register as Serb, Croat, Bosniak or other.
- On 16 February the State Court confirms 21-year prison sentences for Velemir Djuric, Zoran Babic and Dragomir Soldat for the execution of Bosniaks in Carakovo in 1992 and a 20-year sentence for Milorad Trbic, commander of the Bosnian Serb forces, for the Srebrenica massacre.
- On 23 February the federal Parliament approves the declaration signed in January by the tripartite presidency that commits to full European integration.
- On 26 February a judge at the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Azra Miletic, is arrested as part of the Cekic (hammer) anti-corruption operation.
- On 26 February parliamentary negotiations again fail to form a government for the Bosnian Croatian entity, which has been pending since the October 2014 elections.

#### Montenegro

- On 24 February two directors of the Macedonian Health Fund resign after protests over the death of a girl on 9 February, while the public institution decided whether it would pay for her to receive treatment in Turkey.
- On 24 February the government decides to negotiate the higher education law reform with teachers and students, which has been the subject of protests since January.

#### Serbia

- On 3 February the ICTY rules that neither Serbia nor Croatia committed genocide in the Balkans War.

*Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 3 February the Prime Minister Isa Mustafa dismisses the Communities and Return Minister Aleksandar Jablanovic, following protests staged on 16 January demanding his resignation because of a statement he made in which he described a group of Kosovo Albanians who threw ice at a bus of Kosovo Serbs in Djakovica as savages. On 4 February the EU announces that it expects a sharp increase in the number of Kosovars entering the Union in 2015, coinciding with growing protests in Kosovo against unemployment, poverty and corruption.
- On 9 February Serbia and Kosovo agree in Brussels to integrate the courts of the majority-Serb North Kosovo into the Kosovo judicial structure.

*FYROM*

- On 9 February the government announces that it will begin dialogue with students and teachers who have been protesting since January against the reform of the Education Law. Talks will also be held with independent workers associations condemning the tax increase, from 10 to 35%, in force since January.

*Albania*

- On 5 February the Parliament appoints Gent Sejko governor of the Bank of Albania, five months after its dismissal of Ardian Fullani in connection with the theft of five million euros from the bank's vault.

*Greece*

- On 2 February Alexis Tsipras travels to Cyprus on his first official visit as Prime Minister, where he accuses Turkey of sabotaging Cypriot reunification negotiations by sending a hydrocarbon exploration vessel into an area where the Greek Cypriot government had authorized gas prospecting, causing the Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades to leave the talks on 7 October 2014.
- On 5 February the new deputies take office in the first Parliament to be dom-

inated by a party of the far-left. On the same day, thousands gather across the country to protest against the CBE's decision to toughen credit terms for Greece.

- On 18 February Prokopis Pavlopoulos is elected President of the Republic. On 20 February, on a third attempt, the eurozone's Economy Ministers reach an agreement with Greece on a four-month extension of its financial assistance programme. In exchange, Athens presents a modified reforms programme that receives a positive response from the eurozone because of its departure from initially radical stances, thus creating the first splits within Syriza and the government.

*Turkey*

- On 8 and 25 February around twenty people are arrested in the last two raids carried out against the 'parallel State,' organized by supporters of the preacher Fethullah Gülen, accused of illegally wiretapping senior officials of the Republic.
- On 22 February the AKP parliamentary majority approves 10 of the 32 articles of the controversial new security bill, which would allow the police to carry out preventive arrests and searches.
- On 28 February the government and pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) urge the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist organization to give up arms.

*Cyprus*

- On 18 February the former mayor of Paphos, Savvas Vergas, is sentenced to six years' imprisonment for accepting bribes and money laundering in connection with the awarding of a contract for the town's sewage system.
- On 25 February Cyprus and Russia sign an agreement giving Russian navy ships access to Greek Cypriot ports.

*Syria*

- On 5 February 10 people are killed in Damascus in an Army of Islam rocket attack. The army responds with airstrikes on the district of Ghouta, where the Army of Islam is based.

- On 12 February the UN Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution presented by Russia that increases measures to block the financing of jihadist groups.
- On 15 February Kurdish forces supported by FSA take control of a strategic hill in the south of Kobani, Aleppo, a stronghold of Daesh.
- On 17 February the army captures various towns to the north of Aleppo.
- On 26 February the number of Christians kidnapped in Hasada by Daesh exceeds 220, in reaction to the advance of Kurdish troops and the international coalition.

*Lebanon*

- On 6 February in Beirut the authorities begin to remove political posters that denote areas controlled by rival groups in the civil war, following an agreement made between the main political parties, including Hezbollah.

*Jordan*

- On 3 February Daesh releases a video showing the murder of lieutenant Moaz al-Kasasbeh, member of the influential al-Kasasbeh tribe in al-Karak. In response, Jordan executes the Daesh terrorist Sajida al-Rishawi and Iraqi al-Qaeda member Ziyad Karboli. On 6 February thousands of Jordanians demonstrate calling for Abdullah II to cease airstrikes on Daesh, in the framework of the international anti-jihadist coalition, to avoid the repetition of cases similar to that of al-Kasasbeh.

*Egypt*

- On 2 February the Criminal Court of Giza confirms the death sentences handed down to 183 people implicated in the murder of 11 police officers in Kerdasa, following the eviction of Islamist camps in August 2013. On 6 February the army kills 27 members of Daesh in the Sinai in one of the largest offensives launched recently.
- On 8 February the government suspends the football league after clashes between Zamalek supporters and police, which leave at least 30 dead.

- On 10 February Russia and Egypt agree to step up military and commercial cooperation, to establish a Russian free trade zone in the Suez Canal and the Russian construction of the first Egyptian nuclear power plant in Dabaa.
- On 15 February Egypt bombs Daesh positions in Libya, hours after the terrorist group releases a video of the execution of 21 Egyptian Christians. On 17 February Egypt asks for an international operation to be launched against Daesh in Libya. Fajr Libya, the Islamist militia that controls Tripoli, gives Egyptians living in the country 48 hours to leave Libya.
- On 23 February the activist Alaa Abdelfatah is sentenced to five years' imprisonment for organising an unauthorized protest in November 2013.
- On 28 February the Criminal Court in Cairo hands down life sentences to the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie, and another 13 leaders of the group, for the unrest in June 2013. A further four members of the Brotherhood are sentenced to death.

#### Libya

- On 2 February the Tobruk Parliament suspends the political isolation law, approved in May 2013 by the Islamist majority of the General National Congress. On 10 February Daesh takes control of Nawfaliya. On 19 February Daesh takes control of Sirte.
- On 20 February at least 48 people are killed in Qubba in one of the worst bomb attacks in the country's recent history, attributed to Daesh. The attack prompts the Tobruk Parliament to withdraw from the UN-brokered talks aimed at settling the Libyan political crisis.
- On 25 February the activist Intisar al-Hasiri is found dead in Tripoli.

#### Tunisia

- On 5 February the National Assembly approves the new government led by Nidaa Tounis (liberal secular) and which includes Ennahda (Islamist), Afek Tounes (liberal) and the Free Patriotic Union (populist).
- On 17 February four national guards are killed in a jihadist attack in Boulaaba, Kasserine.

#### Algeria

- On 24 February a nationwide protest called by the *Instance de concertation et de suivi de l'opposition* (ICSO) which brings together the main opposition parties, demands that shale gas prospecting in Ain Salah be halted.

#### EU

- On 6 February the EU presents its first global strategy in the fight against Daesh.
- On 6 February NATO decides to strengthen its eastern flank in response to the Russian 'aggression' in Ukraine.
- On 11 February the Minsk II Summit agrees on a ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine. On 16 February the EU confirms its sanctions on separatist and Russian individuals and entities. On 17 February pro-Russian forces break the Minsk ceasefire and take control of Debaltsevo.

#### March 2015

*In Spain, multiple arrests are made in Andalusia for corruption in the same month that the autonomous community holds early elections. France holds local elections. In Italy advances are made in approving the reform of the Senate and more mass immigrant arrivals are reported. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina reach a new agreement to form a government. In Greece, the Parliament approves a bill to take measures against the humanitarian crisis and demands Germany pay war reparations. In Syria, Daesh takes control of the province of Idlib. Egypt delays elections, announces a partial cabinet reshuffle and hands down new sentences to members of the Muslim Brotherhood. In Libya, General Khalifa Haftar is appointed army commander by the Tobruk Parliament. In Tunisia, 23 people are killed in an attack in Daesh in the Bardo National Museum. In Mauritania, workers at the country's biggest iron ore mine continue to strike after two months.*

#### Portugal

- On 16 March the Supreme Court rejects the fifth appeal for the release of former Prime Minister Jose Socrates, arrested in November 2014 under suspicion of corruption.

#### Spain

- On 2 March up to 114 politicians, trade unionists and businesspeople are arrested in Operation Edu, in connection with a corruption network, charged with embezzling European funds destined to pay for training schemes for the unemployed, which were managed by the Andalusian regional government. In February 87 arrests were made.
- On 10 March the ETA member Alberto Plazaola flees from his home, after the Supreme Court annuls the release ordered in December by the National High Court.
- On 22 March Andalusia holds early elections won again by PSOE who take 48 seats. The PP wins 33 seats, followed by Podemos and Citizens who come into the Parliament with 15 and 9 seats respectively.
- On 26 March the Parliament approves the citizen security law, the Criminal Code reform, the anti-terrorism law, the party-funding law and the statute for senior government officials.

#### France

- On 22 March France holds the first round of the local elections in which Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP wins most votes with 36%, halting the advance of Marie Le Pen's FN, which won 24.5%, behind the PS of François Hollande (28.5%).
- On 29 March the second round consolidates the UMP's rise with 45.2% of the votes. The PS wins 31.9% and loses half of its local governments. The FN, with 22.3%, fails to take over any of the regional councils.

#### Monaco

- On 2 March Monaco signs a tax information exchange agreement with Italy, three days after signing a similar agreement with the United Kingdom.

- On 21 March Monaco launches its first satellite into orbit, the TurkmenAl-em52E/MonacoSAT, from Cape Canaveral in the US.

#### Italy

- On 4 March 10 immigrants die and over 500 are rescued in the mass wave of arrivals from Libya, in which 941 people have been rescued in the first four days of March alone. So far this year, arrivals have increased by 43% compared with the total in 2014.
- On 10 March the Chamber of Deputies approves the reform of the Senate, ending the so-called 'perfect bicameralism,' and the Constitution to reduce the powers of regional councils.
- On 11 March the Supreme Court upholds the acquittal of former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of abuse of office and paying for sex with a prostitute in the Ruby Case.

#### Malta

- On 13 March Trade Malta is launched, the new entity for promoting the internationalization of Maltese businesses.
- On 13 March Godwin Sant, the former Resources Authority director arrested on 18 January, is formally charged with different corruption offences.

#### Slovenia

- On 11 March the police search the home of Alenka Bratusek as part of an investigation into the former Prime Minister's alleged abuse of office in her nomination as candidate for European Commissioner.

#### Croatia

- On 27 March Cedomir Vukadin, captain of the Krajina paramilitary forces during the Balkans War is arrested in Strmica.
- On 29 March residents of Labin, Istria, vote against the construction of a coal-fired power plant by 94.5%, in a referendum that was not binding due to a turnout of just 36%.

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 6 March Goran Zubac, director of the State Investigative and Protection Agency, is given a one-year suspended prison sentence for failing to take action during the anti-government demonstrations in 2014.
- On 12 March the main parties of the Bosniak-Croat entity finally agree on a new government led by the Party of Democratic Action (SDA, conservative) which also has five ministerial seats and is joined by the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ-BiH, conservative) and Democratic Front (DF, social democrat) who have five ministerial seats each.
- On 16 March the EU approves the entry into force of the Association and Stabilisation Agreement with Bosnia.
- On 12 March the public prosecutor decides not to press charges against the new Chairman of the House of Representatives Sefik Dzaferovic for war crimes against Bosnian Serb civilians.
- On 31 March after complex negotiations and six months after the elections, Bosnia manages to form a government, made up of nationalist parties. Denis Zvizdic (SDA) is elected Prime Minister of the nine-member cabinet.

#### Montenegro

- On 6 March the former trade unionist and MP Janko Vucinic announces the creation of the new Workers Party, inspired by the Greek party Syriza.
- On 27 March Montenegro officially protests against Croatia for planning oil exploration in waters around the disputed Prevlaka peninsula.
- On 30 March the EU and Montenegro open negotiating chapters 16 and 30 on External Relations in the European accession process.

#### Serbia

- On 18 March eight former Serb police officers are arrested for their alleged involvement in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.
- On 25 March Serbia participates for the first time in an official meeting held in Kosovo.

- On 30 March the ICTY orders Serbia to return the ultranationalist politician, Vojislav Seselj, released in late 2014 for cancer treatment, to the custody of the high court, deeming that his political activities undermine the grounds for his release.

#### Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 3 March seven Kosovars are accused of collaboration with Daesh, in the country's first such action.
- On 6 March the government blocks the accounts of the Kosovo Serb municipalities for not adapting their budgets to the guidelines of the Finance Ministry.
- On 25 March a strike held by judges calling for a pay rise reaches its third week.
- On 30 March hundreds of former fighters from the National Liberation Army (UÇK) attempt to force their way into the government headquarters during a demonstration calling for delayed pension payments to be made.

#### FYROM

- On 10 March the social democrat leader Zoran Zaev calls the government to resign over evidence of electoral fraud by the VMRO-DPMNE.
- On 30 March journalists gather outside the Lustration Commission headquarters to call for the release of the editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper Fokus, Jadranka Kostova, who was arrested accused of spying.

#### Albania

- On 5 March the Democratic Party stages a demonstration to call for the resignation of the Parliament Speaker Ilir Meta, along with the Prime Minister Edi Rama, for their alleged involvement in a murder plot affecting socialist MPs Tom Doshi and Mark Frroku.

#### Greece

- On 11 March the Parliament approves claims against Germany for Second World War reparations and for the return of a forced loan and stolen heritage as a result of the Nazi occupation.

- On 19 March the Parliament approves the law to tackle the humanitarian crisis, one of Syriza's election promises.
- On 20 March Nikolaos Michaloliakos, leader of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party is released from custody. Nikolaos Michaloliakos was imprisoned in September 2013 in connection with the murder of rapper Pavlos Fyssas.

#### Turkey

- On 4 March a court in Istanbul orders a block on the website of the Turkish Atheism Association for "insulting religion."
- On 18 March Turkey begins construction of the Trans-Anatolian gas pipeline Tanap that will transport Azeri gas to the EU as of 2018, meeting 20% of the Union's needs.

#### Cyprus

- On 26 March workers at the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC) suspend strike action that was to cut off the island's electricity supply, after reaching an agreement with the Energy Ministry on plans to privatize the EAC.

#### Syria

- On 1 March the opposition to the Syrian regime in Aleppo rejects the UN's proposal for a ceasefire in the province, as it neither follows a global strategy nor foresees al-Assad's immediate exit from power.
- On 5 March Abu Haman al-Shami, leader of the al-Nusra Front (Front of Victory) is killed in a Syrian army airstrike in Salqin, Idlib.
- On 22 March the international coalition launches new attacks on Daesh positions in Kobani and al-Raqqa.
- On 23 March Syria and Iraq agree on a common anti-terrorism front.
- On 23 March the Islamic Movement of the Free Men of Sham (Levant) – part of the Islamic Front – and the Sham Falcons Brigade join forces.
- On 28 March the army withdraws from Idlib, leaving the entire province under jihadist control.

#### Lebanon

- On 3 March the terrorist Abdulrahman Tamar is killed in a gunfight. Tamar was wanted by the authorities in connection with various bomb attacks against the army in Tripoli in October 2014.
- On 5 March Lebanese troops, coordinated with Christian militias, Hezbollah and the Syrian Social Nationalist Party, launch their first offensive, taking Daesh and al-Nusra Front positions.

#### Egypt

- On 1 March the parliamentary elections scheduled for between 21 March and 7 May are postponed by the Constitutional Court, which rules that the modification of the constituencies under the current election law is unconstitutional.
- On 4 March the Council of Ministers approves the Investment Law.
- On 5 March as part of a partial cabinet reshuffle, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi sacks the Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim, one of the central figures behind the wave of repression since the July 2013 coup. Ibrahim will be replaced by the head of the National Security Department Magdy Abdel Ghaffar.
- On 7 March Mahmoud Hassan Ramadan is executed, sentenced to death on 5 February for throwing a teenager from a rooftop in Alexandria on 5 July 2013 during the clashes that followed the 2013 coup. This is the first execution of a supporter of the deposed Islamist President Mohamed Morsi out of the hundreds of death sentences passed in the last year and a half.
- On 16 March the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohammed Badie and another 13 brotherhood leaders are sentenced to death for attacks against the security forces following the dispersal of the Islamist camps in August 2013.

#### Libya

- On 2 March Khalifa Haftar is appointed army commander by the Tobruk Parliament.

- On 3 March Tobruk government forces launch an attack on Tripoli's Mitiga airport, controlled by Islamist militias.
- On 4 March the National Oil Company (NOC) declares force majeure on many of its facilities due to the recent stream of attacks, largely carried out by Daesh.

#### Tunisia

- On 18 March 23 people are killed in a Daesh terrorist attack at the National Bardo Museum, the same day that Parliament debates the reform of the anti-terrorism law. On 23 March the Prime Minister Habib Essid dismisses the capital's police chiefs after security failings are found.
- On 28 March at least nine members of the Okba Ibn Nafaa Brigade, including its leader and mastermind behind the museum attack Luqman Abu Saqr, are killed in a National Guard operation in Gafsa.
- On 30 March 25,000 people demonstrate against jihadist terrorism.

#### Algeria

- On 8 March the Minister of National Solidarity, Family and Women's Affairs Mounia Meslem announces an upcoming reform of the Family Code that addresses shortcomings detected since the previous reform in 2005, and strengthens and guarantees the rights of women.

#### Morocco

- On 8 March to mark International Women's Day, a demonstration in Rabat calls for the effective implementation of gender-equality rights, included in the 2011 constitutional reform.
- On 16 March Mohammed VI announces that he is willing to modify Moroccan legislation that makes abortion illegal for Moroccan women in the majority of cases.

#### Mauritania

- On 28 March the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz calls workers from the country's biggest iron ore mining



hub Zouerate, who have been on strike since 28 January to demand pay rises, to resume activity while negotiations are held between the Industrial and Mining National Society (SNIM) and the Free Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (CLTM).

#### EU

- On 8 March the President of the Commission Jean-Claude Juncker calls for the creation of a European army, at a time of increasing tensions with Russia over the situation in Ukraine and amid concerns of growing jihadism.
- On 12 March Iceland withdraws its candidacy to enter the EU.
- On 16 March the EU adopts a common strategy for Syria and Iraq, which includes a billion euros to support forces that oppose Daesh, the prevention of regional contagion, the strengthening of border control, vital humanitarian aid and the region's international protection.
- On 19 March the EU and Switzerland sign a historic agreement on transparency and the fight against tax evasion.

#### Arab League

- On 29 March the Arab League agrees on the formation of a joint military force to fight against terrorism and debates measures to halt Iran's advance in the region.

#### April 2015

*Italy, overwhelmed by the influx of immigrants from Libya, asks the UE for urgent assistance, in a month in which at least 950 immigrants die in the Strait of Sicily. The EU activates the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia. An Islamist attack in Zvornik, in the Republika Srpska, ignites ethnic tensions in Bosnia. Kosovo sets up a special court for the 1998 Kosovo conflict and anti-government demonstrations are held, in the same month Kosovo Serb MPs end their parliamentary boycott. Tensions intensify between Albania and the FYROM following two UÇK bomb attacks. In Greece, Alexis Tsipras reshuf-*

*fles the team responsible for negotiating the terms of the Greek debt with the creditor institutions. In Turkey, members of the terrorist group Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP-C) assassinate the public prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz. In Cyprus, the left-wing candidate Mustafa Akinci wins the presidential elections in Northern Cyprus. In Syria, Daesh takes control of most of the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk in Damascus. Egypt approves the Election Law reform demanded by the Constitutional Court and new sentences are passed against the Muslim Brotherhood. In Libya, Daesh's presence continues to expand.*

#### Portugal

- On 30 April around 30 Portuguese media companies call for the end of the law that regulates the coverage of the election campaigns, in force since 1975, a week after the two ruling parties, PSD and CDS, and the main opposition party, PS, promote a reform of the law that is as restrictive as the current one.

#### Spain

- On 16 April the former vice-President of the government and former managing director of the IMF Rodrigo Rato is detained for eight hours as part of a court investigation against him for fraud, asset stripping and money laundering.

#### France

- On 1 April the former President Nicolas Sarkozy is declared 'assisted witness' by the Paris public prosecutor, after testifying regarding his accounts in his 2012 presidential campaign.
- On 7 April the socialist senator and former mayor of Tours Jean Germain commits suicide before the beginning of his trial for corruption, leaving a note protesting his innocence and condemning the persecution of the French political elite.

#### Italy

- On 19 April at least 950 irregular immigrants drown in the Strait of Sicily

when their boat capsizes, in the greatest tragedy of this type in the Mediterranean in recent decades. Between 10 and 17 April a total of 13,500 immigrants have been rescued. Since the beginning of 2015, the number of deaths has risen to 1,600, while a further 35,000 have managed to reach Europe. At this rate, the figures will have far exceeded the total for 2014 (3,500 deaths and 218,000 arrivals). Overwhelmed by such an alarming increase, Italy urges the EU to provide assistance and requests an emergency European summit on irregular immigration. On 22 April the Parliament endorses the government's request to the UN for permission to launch airstrikes against boats used by illegal people trafficking networks, which are moored in Libyan ports.

#### Slovenia

- On 23 April the Constitutional Court annuls the two-year prison sentence for corruption handed down to the former Prime Minister Janez Jansa, citing irregularities in the court proceedings and asks for a retrial.

#### Croatia

- On 15 April the name of the new social democratic party of former President Ivo Josipovic is revealed, Naprijed Hrvatska (Forward Croatia).
- On 13 April the Czech national Vid Jedlicka proclaims the "new independent State" of Liberland, six square kilometres in Gornja Siga, a no man's land on the banks of the Danube between Serbia and Croatia.

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 8 April the ICTY sentences the former Bosnian Serb general Zdravko Tolimir to life imprisonment for the Srebrenica massacre of 1995.
- On 13 April the former Bosnian Serb officer Vinko Pandurevic is released by the ICTY after serving two thirds of his 13-year prison sentence for the Srebrenica massacre.
- On 16 April the Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik makes a historic visit to Srebrenica to pay tribute to the thou-

sands of Bosniaks who died in the 1995 massacre.

- On 21 April the EU activates the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with Bosnia that will enter into force on 1 June 2015.
- On 27 April a Bosnian man, Nerdin Ibic, bursts into a police station in Zvornik firing a gun and shouting "Allah is great." The gunman and a police officer are killed in the attack that ignites ethnic tensions due to Zvornik's location in the Republika Srpska.

#### Serbia

- On 15 April the former Croatian Serb general and President of the now-defunct Republic of Serbian Krajina Goran Hadzic arrives in Novi Sad after being released by the ICTY, because he is suffering from terminal brain cancer.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 8 April the government estimates that there were 25,000 militants fighting in the ranks of the UÇK during the Kosovo conflict, 5,000 more than previous estimates. This is the step prior to the publication of a detailed list of combatants, which will enable these people to receive state pensions as war veterans.
- On 14 April Civilna Zastita (Civil Protection), the Kosovo Serb militia in northern Kosovo, is integrated into the Kosovo police force.
- On 14 April clashes break out in North Kosovo after a young Serb is stabbed on the bridge that delineates the Serbian and Albanian sectors in Mitrovica.
- On 15 April the Constitutional Court approves the creation of the EU-backed special war crimes court for the Kosovo conflict.
- On 18 April thousands of people called by the separatist parties *Vetëvendosje* (Self-determination, social democrat), the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK, conservative) and Initiative for Kosovo (NISMA, centre-left) demonstrate in Pristina against the economic policy of Hashim Thaçi's government and its plans to give greater autonomy to the majority-Serb municipalities.

- On 22 April Serbia and Kosovo agree in Brussels on Pristina halting the privatization process of companies in North Kosovo, rejected by the area's Serb majority.
- On 27 April Kosovo Serb MPs put an end to two months of boycott and return to the Kosovo Parliament after being guaranteed greater decision-making powers.

#### FYROM

- On 13 April the Albanian paramilitary group, the National Liberation Army (UÇK) claims responsibility for an explosion outside the government headquarters in Skopje, which causes no injuries. On 21 April around 40 armed members of the UÇK storm a checkpoint on the Kosovo border.
- On 15 April the meetings continue between the government and the opposition to end the country's political crisis.
- On 23 April students and teachers protest again against the education system approved by the government that foresees the introduction of external exams, as well as the university exams.

#### Greece

- On 1 April the ECB extends its emergency funds limit for Greek banks by 700 million euros, to 71.8 billion euros, a day after talks are suspended in Brussels between Greece and its international creditors. The EU and IMF cite a lack of precise measures in the list of reforms presented by Athens.
- On 5 April the Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis, in a meeting with Christine Lagarde, commits to deliver on financial commitments with the IMF, starting with the payment of 450 million euros that Athens must repay on 9 April.
- On 6 April the parliamentary majority of the government coalition receives approval to create a parliamentary investigation committee to study the circumstances under which it agreed to the country's bailout.
- On 20 April the trial begins against members of the Golden Dawn party, charged with forming a criminal organization active since 2008. The party leaders refuse to show up at the trial.

- On 20 April the government approves a decree that requires town councils to hand their cash reserves over to the Bank of Greece to enable the repayment of the country's debts and to pay salaries.
- On 20 April at least three people are killed when a boat carrying some 200 immigrants runs aground in Rhodes, Dodecaneso.
- On 22 April Greece's Financial Crime Squad (SDOE) arrests the businessman Leonidas Bobolas, member of one of the country's most powerful families, under suspicion of tax evasion and money laundering.
- On 27 April Alexis Tsipras carries out a reshuffle of the team set up to negotiate the terms of the Greek debt with its lending institutions, which includes removing the controversial Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis from the team.

#### Turkey

- On 1 April two militants from the terrorist group the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP-C) take the public prosecutor Mehmet Selim Kiraz hostage, who is responsible for investigating the death in 2014 of the far-left demonstrator Berkin Elvan during the 2013 Taksim Gezi Park protests. The special forces intervene killing the two kidnappers. The prosecutor dies hours later from gunshots fired by the terrorists.
- On 12 April Turkey summons its Apostolic Nuncio in Ankara and withdraws its ambassador in the Vatican after Pope Francis I describes the massacre of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire in 1915 as "genocide." Ankara also considers the European Parliament's resolution that urges Turkey to acknowledge the massacre as "genocide" as "ridiculous."
- On 20 April the Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu extends his condolences to Armenia for the massacre of Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire during World War I and announces that 24 April will be commemorated in a religious ceremony. On 21 April the Armenian Parliament approves a resolution to call upon the international community to recognize the massacre carried out against its people as genocide.

- On 30 April the Criminal Court of First Instance in Istanbul acquits 26 leaders of the Taksim Gezi Park protests in June 2013.

#### Cyprus

- On 18 April the Parliament adopts the foreclosure law demanded by international lenders for the release of a new international aid tranche of 86 million euros.
- On 26 April the leftist candidate and reunification proponent Mustafa Akinci wins in the second round of Northern Cyprus' presidential elections.

#### Syria

- On 2 April Daesh takes control of 90% of the Palestinian refugee camp of Yarmouk in Damascus, home to some 18,000 civilians. At least 2,000 people have fled from the area where fighting breaks out between Daesh and militias loyal to Hamas. This is the first time that Daesh has had a major presence in the Syrian capital.
- On 10 April a round of negotiations in Moscow between the Syrian regime and representatives of the moderate political opposition ends without agreement.

#### Egypt

- On 5 April police agents kill the founder and leader of the terrorist group Ajnad Misr (Soldiers of Egypt) Hamam Mohamed Atiya, in Cairo.
- On 11 April the Criminal Court in Cairo upholds the verdict of 16 March sentencing the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie to death, along with another 13 Brotherhood leaders, for the attacks against the security forces following the dispersal of the Islamist camps in August 2013.
- On 13 April Egypt toughens its legislation against anyone digging or using the Gaza border tunnels, increasing the penalty to life imprisonment. The measure is part of a new attempt to halt the jihadist insurgency and attacks in the Sinai.
- On 15 April the Council of Ministers approves the new version of the Election Law as required by the Constitutional Court, thereby allowing Egyptians with double nationality to run for elections and

foreseeing an increase in the number of independent candidates from 420 to 442. The number of seats reserved for political parties remains at 120, which represents just 20% of the total.

- On 19 April the Criminal Court of Port Said sentences 11 people to death, implicated in the death of 74 football fans in the massacre of 1 February 2012 in the city's football stadium.
- On 21 April the Criminal Court in Cairo sentences the former President Mohamed Morsi, Essam el-Erian, vice-President of the Freedom and Justice Party (PLJ) and other Brotherhood members to 20 years' imprisonment for the clashes outside the Ittihadiya Presidential Palace in December 2012.

#### Libya

- On 19 April Daesh releases a video in which members of the terrorist group are seen executing around 30 Ethiopian Christians.
- On 23 April the self-proclaimed Tripoli government warns the EU against the possibility of a unilateral decision to launch attacks on Libyan soil against people traffickers and says it will respond to any military action taken.

#### Tunisia

- On 7 April four soldiers are killed in an ambush in Kasserine, which borders Algeria and has registered high levels of jihadist activity.
- On 15 April the EC approves a microfinance assistance package of 100 million euros in the form of loans to Tunisia, the first tranche of the microfinance plan adopted in May 2014.

#### EU

- On 23 April the Heads of State and Government of the EU agree, at Italy's request, to expand the two search-and-rescue and monitoring missions in Italian (Triton) and Greek (Poseidon) waters, coordinated by the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex). On 29 April the EC President Jean-Claude Juncker urges European governments to accept mandatory refugee quotas and increase

development assistance for the immigrants' countries of origin.

- On 27 April the 17th EU-Ukraine Summit is held in Kiev, the first within the framework of the association agreement.

#### May 2015

*Spain holds municipal and regional elections and in Italy there are regional elections following the approval of the Election Law reform. The Serbian Prime Minister makes an historic visit to Albania. The political crisis in the FYROM continues. Greece continues its efforts to reach an agreement with its creditors on its debt repayment. Reunification negotiations are resumed in Cyprus. In Syria, Daesh makes major inroads in Homs and Idlib. Egypt calls Arab countries to accelerate the creation of a joint Arab military force. In Libya, Daesh takes complete control over Sirte. Algeria and Morocco reshuffle their cabinets. The EU takes measures against the migration crisis in the Mediterranean.*

#### Spain

- On 24 May Spain holds municipal and regional elections. With a 64.94% turnout the elections are a success for the new parties Citizens (centre) and Podemos (far-left), which run through different popular unity candidacies. They also reveal a weakening in the PP-PSOE two-party system, the two parties winning, respectively, 27% and 25% of the votes in the municipal elections.

#### France

- On 5 May the National Assembly approves the controversial draft law to combat terrorism, which will allow the secret services to spy on French citizens without a court order.
- On 20 May a general teachers' strike is staged – supported by five unions and a large majority of public opinion. There is also a large demonstration in Paris against elements of the government's education reform which are considered a threat to France's intellectual identity, as they foresee

reducing the teaching hours of Latin and Greek, making medieval Christianity or the Enlightenment optional subjects, increasing the hours for studying Islam and putting an end to bilingual classes.

- On 26 May a French court authorizes the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP, right-wing) to be renamed The Republicans, at the request of its leader Nicolas Sarkozy.

#### *Italy*

- On 2-3 May the Italian authorities rescue more than 6,000 immigrants in the Mediterranean.

- On 4 May the Chamber of Deputies approves the Election Law reform known as 'Italicum' by 334 votes in favour to 61 against. The text proposed by the government aims to bring greater stability to the Parliament and foresees a proportional election system.

- On 31 May Italy holds regional elections in which the PD wins most votes in Tuscany, Umbria, Marche, Puglia and Campania, but loses Liguria to the People of Freedom (PdL, right-wing). The populist Five Star Movement becomes Italy's second strongest party. The Northern League (Padanian nationalism) holds onto Veneto and grows in central Italy.

#### *Slovenia*

- On 13 May the Parliament confirms the appointments of Andreja Katic as Defence Minister and Maja Makovec Brencic as Education Minister.

#### *Croatia*

- On 7 May the former Croatian police officer Mihajlo Hrastov is sentenced to four years' imprisonment for the murder of 13 Yugoslav soldiers in Karlovac, ending a 23-year trial, the longest to date for the Balkans War.

- On 28 May clashes break out in Zagreb between the police and war veterans who, for more than 200 days, have been campaigning for the resignation of the Veterans' Affairs Minister Predrag Matic and the approval of improved assistance.

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 3 May more than 5,000 people demonstrate in Banja Luka against the Bosnian Serb government's adoption of the new Labour Law approved by the federal government at the EU's request to advance the accession process.

- On 13 May the federal Parliament rejects the draft resolution presented in February to claim sovereignty over Sutorina and Krusevice from Montenegro. This decision puts an end to the border dispute between Sarajevo and Podgorica.

- On 27 May the SDA elects Bakir Izetbegovic as its President for the next four years.

#### *Montenegro*

- On 8 May the Montenegrin media again condemns the frequent attacks it has suffered after being the victim of two acts of vandalism in Kolasin and Bijelo Polje and asks for greater protection of press freedoms.

#### *Serbia*

- On 27 May Aleksandar Vucic becomes the first Serbian leader to visit Albania. Vucic meets with his counterpart Edi Rama to improve the normally tense bilateral relations.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 8 May the Special Court in Kosovo accuses 32 people of involvement with Daesh and the al-Nusra Front. The Interior Minister estimates that around 300 Kosovars have travelled to the Middle East to fight with Daesh.

#### *FYROM*

- On 9 May a police operation in the Albanian-majority city of Kumanovo leaves eight police officers and 14 UÇK members dead.

- On 12 May the Interior and Transport Ministers Gordana Jankuloska and Mile Janakieski and Intelligence chief Saso Mijalkov resign over the political crisis sparked by the social democratic opposition's accusations against the gov-

ernment for the illegal wiretapping of 20,000 people and abuse of power, which have led to clashes between demonstrators and the police since February. On 13 May the director of the Public Security Office Mitko Cavkov is appointed Interior Minister and the director of the state highway company Vlado Misajlovski, as the new Transport Minister. On 27 May Ljupco Andonovski is named the new head of intelligence.

- On 17 May 20,000 people gather in Skopje to call for the resignation of the Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, in the country's largest protest in the last decade.

#### *Greece*

- On 6 and 12 May Greece makes interest repayments of 200 and 750 million euros respectively to the IMF, as part of the 2010 financial bailout repayment. However, there is still disagreement with its international creditors over the reforms to be taken by Athens in order to receive the 7.2 billion euros of the next tranche of the rescue package, which the country needs to pay back 1.58 billion euros to the IMF before the end of June.

#### *Turkey*

- On 18 May, 20 days ahead of the general election, two devices explode in offices of the People's Democratic Party (HDP, socialist, Kurdish nationalist) in Mersin and Adana.

#### *Cyprus*

- On 15 May Cyprus reunification talks resume, suspended in October 2014 after Turkey sent an exploration vessel into the island's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

- On 28 May the Parliament approves the reform of the penal code to criminalize homophobia.

#### *Syria*

- On 16 May the Pentagon announces that Abu Sayyaf, head of Daesh's gas and oil operations, has been killed in a raid carried out by US Special Operations Forces.

- On 19 May the al-Nusra Front takes control of the military stronghold of al-Mastuma in Idlib from the Syrian regime.
- On 21 May Daesh takes complete control of Palmyra. This latest advance gives Daesh control of more than 50% of Syrian territory.
- On 22 May Daesh takes control of the T3 gas station, shortly after capturing the al-Waleed (al-Tanf) crossing, the only border crossing with Iraq that was still in the hands of the Syrian authorities.
- On 25 May an explosion from a rocket shakes the regime's Alawite stronghold of Latakia, which until now has not been directly involved in the fighting.
- On 28 May the Syrian army is ousted from Ariha, the last town controlled by government forces in Idlib, by a coalition of rebel factions calling itself Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest) and led by the al-Nusra Front.

#### *Egypt*

- On 9 May a court in Cairo sentences Hosni Mubarak and his sons Alaa and Gamal to three years' imprisonment for the misappropriation of public money. The verdict repeats the initial sentence, overturned in January by the Appeal Court.
- On 10 May the Sinai Tribal Federation declares war on Daesh in coordination with the Egyptian armed forces.
- On 11 May the Justice Minister Mahfouz Saber is forced to resign after saying that "the son of a rubbish collector should not become a judge."
- On 16 May the former President Mohamed Morsi and another 105 Islamists are sentenced to death for participating in prison breaks during the 2011 revolution.
- On 16 May the Cairo Court for Urgent Matters designates all of Egypt's Ultra football fan groups as terrorist organizations.
- On 17 May six prisoners are executed for attacks against security forces and being members of Ansar Beit al-Maqdis (Supporters of the Holy House).

#### *Libya*

- On 10 May Libyan military forces under control of the Tobruk government bomb a Turkish cargo ship coming from

Spain after it enters Libyan waters at Derna without authorization. Tobruk accuses Turkey and Qatar of funding the Islamist government controlling Tripoli.

- On 12 May the EU High Representative Federica Mogherini asks the United Nations Security Council to give the green light to military intervention in Libya, in order to put a stop to the massive immigrant trafficking crisis in the Mediterranean. The request comes two days after the internationally-recognized Tobruk government asks the EU to help in its fight against the people-trafficking mafias.
- On 17 May the Libyan authorities arrest around 400 illegal migrants in Tajura, mostly Ethiopian and Somalian, waiting to board a ship for Europe.
- On 21 May control of Sirte is taken by Daesh.
- On 26 May the Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thani escapes unharmed from a terrorist attack in Tobruk, carried out by unidentified armed men.

#### *Tunisia*

- On 18 May Tunisia announces that talks are underway for the release of 172 Tunisians detained in Libya by a group belonging to the Fajr Libya coalition (Libyan Dawn) in retaliation for the arrest on 14 May of one of its leaders Walid el-Klibi in Tunisia.
- On 21 May the Tunisian President Beji Caïd Essebsi travels to the US on an official visit to strengthen bilateral relations and obtain military and financial assistance from Washington in its fight against terrorism.

#### *Algeria*

- On 14 May Abdelaziz Bouteflika makes changes in 10 ministerial positions. Tayeb Belaiz is replaced as Interior Minister by the current Education Minister Noureddine Bedoui. In turn, Belaiz becomes State Minister and special adviser to the President. The Energy and Mining Minister Youcef Youfsi is replaced by Salah Khebbri. In the Finance Ministry Abderrahman Benkhelfa replaces Mohamed Djellab.
- On 19 May at least 23 members of Daesh are killed in a military operation in Algiers.

- On 23 May Amine Mazouzi is appointed CEO of Sonatrach, to replace Said Sahnoun. Executive changes are also announced in Air Algérie, Naftal and Sonelgaz.
- On 28 May Abdelkader Bensalah resigns as Secretary General of the National Rally for Democracy (RND) due to his growing role at the head of the National Council, owing to Abdelaziz Bouteflika's fragile health. The former Prime Minister and Cabinet director Ahmed Ouyahia takes over as leader of the RND.

#### *Morocco*

- On 15 May Mohammed VI approves loosening restrictions for legal abortion to include, as well as cases where the mother's life is threatened, foetal impairment and cases of rape or incest.
- On 20 May Mohammed VI appoints Abdelaziz el-Omari Minister of Relations with Parliament and Civil Society to replace Lahbib Choubani; Jamila el-Moussalli Education Minister Delegate to replace Soumia Benkhaldoun; Khalid Barjaoui (Popular Movement, MP, liberal), Vocational Training Minister to replace Abdeladim Guerrouj; Mohand Laenser, current Territory and Urbanism Minister, as Youth and Sport Minister after Mohamed Ouzzine's departure from the post in January. Driss Merroun (MP) will be the new Territory and Urbanism Minister.

#### *Mauritania*

- On 7 May the President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz responds to the thousands of people who on 30 April protested against the country's stance on slavery, saying that in Mauritania there are only "the last vestiges of that practice."
- On 14 May the jihadist group al-Murabitun (The Sentinels), which dominates large areas between Mauritania and Chad, pledges allegiance to Daesh and reveals the name of its emir Adnan Abul Waleed el-Sahrawi.

#### *EU*

- On 13 May the EC adopts the European Agenda on Migration.

- On 21-22 May the EU and member countries of the Eastern Partnership hold a summit in Riga to accelerate the association agreements with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia and establish “tailor-made relations” with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus.
- On 27 May the EC announces its first provisional emergency measures, which include relocating 40,000 immigrant arrivals to Greece and Italy in recent months among the States, some of which reject outright the measure or question the redistribution criteria.

#### *Arab League*

- On 25 May Egypt’s army chief General Mahmoud Hegazy asks his Arab counterparts, gathered in Cairo, to finalize measures for creating a joint Arab military force within a month.

#### **June 2015**

*In Spain and France there are ministerial changes. The Association and Stabilisation Agreement comes into force between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the EU. Montenegro opens two new accession negotiation chapters. Slovenia extradites the former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj to Kosovo. Greece and the EU fail to reach an agreement in negotiations on debt repayment and a third rescue plan. The AKP loses its absolute majority in Turkey’s general election. Fighting intensifies in Syria over control of Hasaka and Idlib. Jordan announces plans to set up a buffer zone on its border with Syria. In Egypt, Mohamed Morsi and senior members of the Muslim Brotherhood are handed down new sentences and a retrial is ordered against Hosni Mubarak, the same month that the public prosecutor is killed by a car bomb. In Libya, Daesh takes control of Harawa. In Tunisia, a Daesh sympathizer kills 38 tourists in a hotel close to Sousse, the same day that Daesh carries out attacks in France and Kuwait. Tensions rise between the Western Bloc and Russia and the EU continues in its efforts to negotiate solutions for the migration crisis in the Mediterranean.*

#### *Portugal*

- On 7 June the government announces that it will be pay back 2 billion euros to the IMF ahead of schedule to save on interest, after having also made an early payment of 6.6 billion euros for its bailout repayment.

#### *Spain*

- On 12 June the Parliament unanimously votes in favour of granting Spanish citizenship to Sephardic Jews.
- On 12 June Felipe VI revokes the title of Duchess of Palma from his sister, Princess Cristina of Borbón, who is already excluded from royal family events because of her involvement in the Noos corruption case.
- On 25 June Manuel Chaves, PSOE Secretary General, former Andalusian President and former Minister, gives up his seat after being charged by the Supreme Court in the ERE corruption case affecting the Andalusian government. In April, another former Andalusian President Jose Antonio Griñan had already resigned as senator for the same reason.
- On 25 June the EU Secretary of State Iñigo Mendez de Vigo is appointed Education Minister to replace Jose Ignacio Wert.

#### *France*

- On 9 June the government presents 18 measures to create jobs which include a financial bonus for a company’s first created job and caps on damages for unfair dismissal.
- On 17 June Clotilde Valter is appointed Secretary of State for State Reform and Simplification to replace Thierry Mandon, who is appointed Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research; Martine Pinville takes over as Secretary of State for Trade and Crafts replacing Carole Delga. Laurence Rossignol, Secretary of State for the Family, becomes Children’s Welfare Minister.
- On 25 June violent unrest erupts among taxi drivers in Paris and other cities against the Uber mobile application. On 29 June the directors of Uber for France and Western Europe are arrested in Paris for legal irregularities.

- On 26 June a security guard is beheaded and a further two people are injured in a Daesh attack on a gas factory in Saint-Quentin-Fallavier.

#### *Italy*

- On 4 June 44 politicians and businesspeople are arrested in Rome as part of the Mafia Capital corruption case accused of rigging public contracts for the management of migrant reception centres.
- On 6-7 June 5,851 immigrants trying to reach Italian shores are intercepted.
- On 12 June France closes its border with Italy to stop the entry from Ventimiglia of at least 200 illegal immigrants. Italy threatens to give papers to all immigrants if it does not receive assistance from the EU. Germany urges Italy to comply with the Schengen Agreement and take charge of the deportations.

#### *Malta*

- On 3 June Rosette Thake is elected Secretary General of the Nationalist Party (PN, Christian democracy).

#### *Croatia*

- On 3 May fresh charges are brought against the Mayor of Zagreb Milan Bandic for abuse of office. This is the second trial against Bandic following proceedings brought against him in February.
- On 11 June Croatia protests the decision of a Bosnian court to file charges against senior ranks of the Croatian army suspected of involvement in committing war crimes in Bosnia.

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 1 June the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU comes into force.
- On 5 June the government of the Bosniak-Croat entity collapses following the exit of the Democratic Front (DF, social democrat) from the governing coalition.
- On 10 June the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation adopts a crucial reform plan for advancing the accession process.

However, the Bosnian Serb government refuses to sign.

- On 25 June a Bosnian court, for the first time, orders aggressors of a woman who was raped during the Bosnian war to give her compensation. Between 20,000 and 30,000 women suffered sexual abuses during the Bosnian war and no trial has been held for such crimes until now.

#### *Montenegro*

- On 3 June the Parliament Speaker Ranko Krivokapic is reelected as leader of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which forms part of the government coalition led by the Democratic Party of Socialists (DPS).
- On 22 June Montenegro opens two new chapters in its accession negotiations: Financial services and Trans-European networks.

#### *Serbia*

- On 16 June the President Tomislav Nikolic cancels his visit to Bosnia and Herzegovina at the request of the Bosniak member of the tripartite presidency Bakir Izetbegovic, because of the arrest in Switzerland of Naser Oric, former Bosnian commander wanted by Belgrade for war crimes against Serbs in Zaluze in 1992. On 25 June Bern extradites Oric to Bosnia, where he is also wanted by the judiciary.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On June the Interior Minister reports that 7,500 illegal Kosovo immigrants have been returned from the EU since January.
- On 19 June in response to a resolution made by the Kosovo Parliament, Slovenia releases former UÇK commander and former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj, arrested on 17 June, thus avoiding their extradition to Serbia.

#### *FYROM*

- On 10 June a new round of talks fail between the government and the opposition to put an end to the country's political crisis, while in the streets there

are growing signs of discontent towards the government of Nikola Gruevski, especially among the Albanian community, led by the Besa movement.

- On 16 June the opposition's social democrat leader Zoran Zaev reveals new recordings that implicate another government coalition party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI, Albanian nationalist), in the corruption scam affecting the VMRO-DPMNE.

#### *Albania*

- On 21 June Albania holds local elections in which the 37 parties of the centre-left government coalition win 62% of the votes.

#### *Greece*

- On 11 June the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (ERT) begins broadcasting after being closed for two years because of the economic crisis.
- On 15 June Fofi Gennimata is elected as the new PASOK leader.
- On 29 June the banks and stock exchange are closed and a 60-euro daily limit on cash withdrawals is imposed after negotiations fail with international creditors, who reject Athens' request to extend the rescue plan if the country does not adopt new austerity measures.
- On 30 June the deadline runs out for Greece to agree on a third bailout plan and without Athens paying the corresponding 1.5 billion euros for the previous bailout.

#### *Turkey*

- On 7 June Turkey holds a general election in which the AKP loses its majority, which it has held since 2002, winning just 255 seats, down from 311, and is forced into a coalition in order to remain in government.
- On 17 June the former President and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel dies. Demirel was twice overthrown by the military in his seven years at the head of the government.
- On 28 June the police take action against participants in the Gay Pride march in Istanbul and disperses crowds from Taksim Square and Istiklal Street.

#### *Cyprus*

- On 25 June the Parliament passes a bill allowing civil servants and public employees to hold positions in political parties.
- On 23 June the IMF reports that Cyprus' economic situation is faring well after the measures it has adopted, which have seen growth levels in the country since the first quarter of 2015 turn positive for the first time in four years.

#### *Syria*

- On 4 June Iran sends 20,000 soldiers to Latakia, after Idlib falls into the hands of the al-Nusra Front.
- On 8-9 June 150 representatives of the Syrian opposition meet in Cairo to try and form an alternative opposition front to the fragmented National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NCSROF).
- On 11 June the al-Nusra Front kills at least 20 members of the country's Druze minority in Qalb Loze, Idlib.
- On 12 June the Syrian army and pro-government armed groups overthrow rebel militias who had taken the al-Thala air base in the province of Sweida on 10 June.
- On 16 June Kurdish forces and the Free Syrian Army (FSA) capture Tal Abiad, on the Turkish border, from Daesh.
- On 16 June at least 34 people are killed and 190 injured when rebel forces bomb government-controlled Aleppo.
- On 22 June Kurdish forces and the FSA drive Daesh from the Ain Aisa military base in al-Raqqa.
- On 23 June Daesh destroys two mausoleums in Palmyra.
- On 26 June at least 47 people are killed in Deraa during the rebel Southern Storm offensive against regime positions.

#### *Lebanon*

- On 9 June Hezbollah repels a Daesh attack on two strategic hills in Ras Baalbek.

#### *Jordan*

- On 29 June Jordan announces its intention to set up a buffer zone along

its border with Syria open to Syrian civilians and non-extremist militias.

### Egypt

- On 1 June Mahmoud Ghozlan is arrested, the former spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood.
- On 4 June the Appeals Court orders the retrial of former President Hosni Mubarak for his responsibility in the death of demonstrators during the Egyptian revolution.
- On 16 June the Criminal Court in Cairo sentences the former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi and 16 other Islamists to life imprisonment accused of spying and collaboration with foreign organizations to plan attacks in Egypt. The spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie is sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in the same case. Another three Brotherhood leaders – Jairat ash-Shater, Mohamed al-Beltagui and Ahmed Abdelati – are sentenced to death, along with a further 13 people who are tried *in absentia*.
- On 16 June the Egyptian judiciary upholds the death sentence for the country's former President Mohamed Morsi for his escape from the Wadi el-Natrun prison in January 2011.
- On 29 June Egypt's public prosecutor Hisham Barakat dies from injuries received in a bomb attack in Cairo.

### Libya

- On 5 June Daesh seizes Harawa power plant, which supplies electricity to Sirte and the Gardabiya airport.
- On 12 June at least seven people are killed when members of Daesh open fire on a demonstration in Derna protesting against the jihadist presence in the city.

### Tunisia

- On 5 June the Interior Minister enforces a curfew in Douz after several outbreaks of violence in recent days over poor living conditions and high unemployment.
- On 23 June Tunisia's Criminal Court of First Instance sentences the ousted President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, who has fled the country, the former Public Lands and National Defence Minister

Ridha Grira and Ben Ali's brother-in-law Mohamed Sakhr el-Materi to 10 years in prison and orders them to pay 100,000 euros for illegally awarding a contract for a quarry in Bizerte.

- On 26 June the Daesh sympathiser Seifeddine Rezgui storms the Riu Imperial Marhaba hotel, near Sousse, and kills 38 tourists before being shot down by police. The attack coincides with others perpetrated by Daesh in Grenoble and Kuwait. In the days following the attack Tunisia deploys a large-scale security operation and makes numerous arrests.

### Algeria

- On 4 June an army colonel is killed in Batna in an attack claimed by AQIM. The terrorist group claims responsibility for another attack, carried out on 12 May also in Batna, which left four communal guards dead.

### EU

- On 7 June the G-7 adopts new measures against Russia, excluded from the club over the crisis in Ukraine, where clashes continue in Donbass. On 10 June the European Parliament approves the "critical reassessment" of relations with Moscow. On 14 June the US announces it is sending tanks into Central Europe as a "deterrent." On 17 June Russia announces the addition of 40 new intercontinental nuclear missiles to its nuclear arsenal and NATO triples its defensive capacity in Central Europe. On 22 June the EU extends its sanctions against Russia to 31 January 2016.
- On 9 June citing "procedural reasons," Martin Schulz, President of the European Parliament delays the vote on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) because of protests from MPs in favour of a free trade agreement with the US.
- On 16 June Europe of Nations and Freedom is created, a new European parliamentary group composed of the French National Front, the Dutch Party for Freedom, the Italian Northern League, the Belgian Flemish Interest and the Austrian Freedom Party.
- On 17 June the European Council postpones its decision on the Commission's plan to redistribute asylum seek-

ers and refugees who are arriving en masse in and Greece, after failing to reach an agreement on a relocation mechanism.

- On 22 June the EU approves the activation of the first phase of a military operation against mafias trafficking immigrants across the Mediterranean.

### July 2015

*In Portugal, the former Minister Antonio Vara is arrested. Spain approves the reform of its criminal code. There are new episodes in the migration crisis in Italy and France. Italy restricts the right to strike. The border mediation process between Slovenia and Croatia is endangered. Bosnia advances along its path to accession approving major reforms. The government and opposition of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia agree to hold early elections in April 2016. Greece requests a third bailout plan after accepting the EU and IMF's conditions and the coalition government enters a crisis. Turkey launches offensives in Syria against Daesh and the Kurdish militias. In Libya, Saif al-Islam Gaddafi is sentenced to death by a court in Tripoli. Tunisia tightens its security.*

### Portugal

- On 10 July the former Minister Armando Vara is arrested in relation with the corruption case affecting the former socialist Prime Minister Jose Socrates.
- On 22 July the Parliament approves tougher abortion laws.

### Spain

- On 1 July the criminal code reform comes into force that introduces reviewable life imprisonment and toughens sentences for corruption, illegal funding for political parties, gender-based violence, violence towards minors and animal mistreatment. It also foresees a DNA database for anyone convicted of a crime.

### France

- On 1 July *Le Nouvel Observateur* reports that France has spied on inter-



national telecommunications since 2008, days after the Exterior Minister Laurent Fabius summons the US ambassador, on 22 June, over wiretapping that Washington carried out between 2006 and 2012 on Presidents Chirac, Sarkozy and Hollande, revealed by WikiLeaks.

- On 2 July a court in Nanterre overturns Jean-Marie Le Pen's suspension from the National Front approved on 4 May by the party's leadership.
- On 7 July Joseba Iñaki Reta de Frutos and Javier Goienetxea, considered the heads of the ETA terrorist organization's logistical apparatus, are arrested in Osses, Aquitania.
- On 28 July around 2,000 immigrants from the illegal camp known as The Jungle are arrested after storming the Eurotunnel terminal in Calais in an attempt to enter the United Kingdom.

#### *Monaco*

- On 7 July the government agrees to resume the Anse du Portier project, which will reclaim six hectares from the Mediterranean, thereby easing the pressure on the world's most densely populated country.

#### *Italy*

- On 7 July the former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi is sentenced to three years in prison by a court in Naples for bribing senators.
- On 9 July a total of 823 immigrants are rescued in the Strait of Sicily, part of the unending arrivals from the North African coast.
- On 21 July the ECHR condemns Italy for failing to offer appropriate legal protection to gay couples or recognize their rights.
- On 22 July the police arrest 41 members of the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta' and seizes 56 of the organization's companies, valued at approximately 2 billion euros.
- On 27 July 13 bodies are found aboard a vessel carrying 522 immigrants in the Strait of Sicily by an Irish ship participating in the Triton mission.
- On 28 July after the general strikes staged by workers at Rome's metro network, Alitalia and the ruins of Pompeii,

the government presents a new law that restricts the right to strike.

#### *Croatia*

- On 23 July Croatia threatens to withdraw from the court of international arbitration set up to settle the border dispute with Slovenia, after it is revealed that confidential information has been exchanged between one of the judges and the government of Ljubljana.
- On 27 July the Constitutional Court orders the retrial of the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader (HDZ) for corruption.

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 2 July the Republika Srpska freezes the 8.75% price increase on electricity faced with its widespread rejection.
- On 11 July the Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic is forced to leave the site for the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre, after Bosniak attendees throw stones at him.
- On 15 July the Parliament of the Republika Srpska votes in favour of holding a public referendum on the authority of the federal judicial system in the Bosnian Serb entity and the High Representative of the International Community Valentin Inzko.
- On 19 July the Energy Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the mining trade unions agree on a price increase on energy consumption in the entity.
- On 23 July the federal government and that of the country's two entities approve the key reforms demanded by the EU and IMF to be an official candidate for accession.
- On 30 July thousands protest in Sarajevo against the Bosnian Croat entity's approval of the labour law reform.

#### *Montenegro*

- On 19 July Montenegro reports the arrest of former Serbian general Borislav Djukic for war crimes in 1993.
- On 23 July Dejan Perunicic is appointed the new intelligence agency chief within the programme of pre-accession reforms.

#### *Serbia*

- On 6 July the Hungarian Parliament approves the construction of a fence to contain the flow of refugees attempting to enter the EU along the 175-kilometre border with Serbia.
- On 7 July at Serbia's request, Russia vetoes a UN Security Council resolution to qualify the Srebrenica massacre as genocide.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 24 July negotiations for an agreement on vehicles crossing the border between Serbia and Kosovo are halted after Pristina demands that Belgrade recognize registration plates with the initials RKS (Republic of Kosovo) as legal.

#### *FYROM*

- On 15 July the Enlargement Commissioner Johannes Hahn announces an agreement reached by the government and opposition to put an end to the country's political crisis and form a provisional government ahead of the early elections in 2016.
- On 23 July, despite the opposition boycott, the coalition government submits the budget for 2016 to the Parliament, the largest in its 25 years of independence.
- On 24 July Xhemail Rexhepi, member of the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI, Albanian nationalist) is killed in Kumanovo in a fight with other party members.

#### *Albania*

- On 22 July the Parliament approves the Higher Education law reform, contested by students and teachers.

#### *Greece*

- On 5 July 61.3% of Greeks vote against accepting the terms of the international creditors in the referendum held by the government. After the result, Antonis Samaras resigns as leader of the main opposition party, New Democracy. The Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis

resigns to 'facilitate' the new negotiations and is replaced by Euclides Tsakalotos.

- On 8 July Greece asks the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) for a third bailout package to be able to repay the debt and stabilize the financial system. On 13 July Greece and the Eurogroup reach an agreement, thus avoiding the 'Grexit' – Greece's exit from the eurozone.
- On 16 July the Eurogroup gives Greece a 7-billion-euro bridge loan to avoid bankruptcy.
- On 18 July the 10 new ministers are sworn into the cabinet, reshuffled by Alexis Tsipras due to Syriza's internal crisis.
- On 15 and 22 July the Parliament approves reform packages presented by the government and demanded by the eurozone for the third financial bailout package.

#### Turkey

- On 20 July at least 30 people are killed and more than a hundred injured in a suicide bomb attack in Suruç, close to the Syrian city of Kobani. On 21-22 July there are outbreaks of violence in Istanbul as well as in the main Kurdish-majority cities during protests over the attack in Suruç.
- On 24 July Turkey announces the construction of a wall at various points of its border with Syria.
- On 25 July bombing carried out by Turkey throughout the month in the strip of land between Turkey and the jihadist strongholds in Aleppo leave more than 35 jihadists dead. After driving Daesh out of the area and in exchange for the opening of the Incirlik Air base to the international coalition, Turkey is guaranteed the creation of the so-called 'Daesh-free Zone,' a 98-km long and 40-km wide buffer area along the border.
- On 27 July the number of people arrested in successive raids in Turkey suspected of having connections with Daesh, the PKK or DHKP/C reaches 900.

#### Cyprus

- On 24 July George Pamboridis is appointed the new Health Minister to replace Philippos Patsalis.

#### Syria

- On 1 July the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) declare they have taken full control of the strategic town of Tel Abyad from Daesh.
- On 2 July the Pentagon confirms the death of Tariq al-Harzi on 16 June, a key figure in Daesh's logistical operations.
- On 2 July Daesh releases photographs of its militants destroying different sculptures in Palmyra, among them the Lion of Al-Lat.
- On 4 July a video released on social networks connected with Daesh shows the execution of 25 prisoners in Palmyra's Roman theatre.
- On 6 July Daesh recaptures Ain Issa, taken by Kurdish militias on 26 June.
- On 7 July Syria's Kurdish forces report taking back more than 10 towns close to al-Raqqa from Daesh.
- On 8 July Muhsin al-Fadhli, one of the heads of al-Qaeda in Syria, is killed during an attack by the international coalition on Sarmada.
- On 15 July the Syrian army supported by Hezbollah takes a large part of Zabadani.
- On 19 July the Syrian army reports the capture of new towns close to Latakia controlled by Islamist groups.
- On 27 July the US appoints Michael Ratney as the new Special Envoy for Syria to replace Daniel Rubinstein.
- On 27 July rebels launch a major attack on regime-controlled Sahl al-Ghab, which gives access to the provinces of Latakia and Tartus.
- On 29 July the al-Nusra Front kidnaps Nadim al-Hassan, the head of the Division 30 rebel group.
- On 31 July the international coalition bombs al-Nusra Front targets in Azaz, Aleppo, in response to the attack led by the al-Qaeda-affiliated group on Division 30 two days previous.

#### Lebanon

- On 9 July Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM, Maronite Christian) leads a march in Beirut to protest against the appointment of the new army chief, a position reserved for the Christian community, along with the country's presidency, which has been empty since May 2014 due to a dis-

agreement between political parties. The mandate of the current army chief Jean Kahwaji expires in September 2015.

- On 25 July protests and unrest breaks out in Beirut over the so-called Garbage Crisis, following the collapse of the country's main landfill and failure of the authorities to find a solution.
- On 28 July at least two people are killed in clashes between Jund al-Sham and Fatah in the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp in Sidon.

#### Egypt

- On 2 July the air force initiates new airstrikes on jihadists in Sinai, where terrorist attacks continue throughout the month. The growing concern in Egypt and Israel over the upsurge of Daesh in the region prompts Israel to allow Egypt to use military helicopters in Sinai.
- On 17 July six members of the Muslim Brotherhood are killed in clashes with police in Giza. A further 15 Brotherhood members are arrested in Cairo and 20 more in Alexandria.

#### Libya

- On 12 July Libya's factions participating in negotiations in Skhirat, Morocco, undersign a draft peace deal to form a national unity government with the notable absence of the General National Congress, the unrecognized Tripoli-based government.
- On 28 July a Libyan court sentences Saif al-Islam Gaddafi to death *in absentia*, who is currently being held captive in an unknown location by Zintan militiamen that oppose the Islamist authorities in Tripoli.

#### Tunisia

- On 4 July Tunisia declares a state of emergency a week after the attack in Sousse.
- On 7 July the Prime Minister Habib Essid announces the acceleration of construction works for a 168-kilometre wall and defensive trench on the Libyan border.
- On 10 July the authorities arrest 1,000 people and prohibit a further 15,000 from leaving the country, in connection with the attack in Sousse.

## Morocco

- On 2 July the Central Office of Criminal Investigation arrests nine people suspected of belonging to Daesh.
- On 8 July Wafaa Charaf, a known Moroccan activist, member of the 20 February Movement and prisoner in Tangier, initiates a 48-hour hunger strike to denounce the poor conditions of Morocco's prisons.
- On 21 July eight people are arrested in Morocco for being part of a terrorist cell linked to Daesh.
- On 28 July the journalist Ali Lmrabet ends a 34-day hunger strike outside the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva, after the Moroccan Interior Minister officially authorizes the consular procedure allowing Lmrabet to set up a Satirical weekly magazine to follow his previous one, *Demain*.

## EU

- On 1 July Luxembourg assumes the six-month rotating European presidency with the priorities of strengthening the Union's international position, dealing with the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, promoting sustainable development, combining freedom and security, reactivating the Single market and Europe's competitiveness on the global stage and focusing on policies to deepen the EU's social dimension, boost employment and attract investment.
- On 7 July the European Parliament approves an EC proposal to increase its budget for managing migration flows by 69.6 million euros.
- On 13 July the current Dutch President of the Eurogroup Jeroen Dijsselbloem is elected for a new term.

## August 2015

*France and the United Kingdom agree on measures to work together to manage the migration crisis in the Channel. The worsening situation in Syria and saturation in neighbouring countries cause a dramatic increase in the flows of refugees trying to enter the EU through Italy, Greece and the Balkans.*

*The Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras resigns forcing the creation of an interim government until early elections are held in September. There is increasing unrest in southeastern Turkey between security forces and the PKK. In Lebanon, the so-called Garbage Crisis triggers major citizen protests denouncing corruption and the ineffectiveness of the public authorities. The presidents of Egypt and Tunisia ratify their respective anti-terrorism law reforms. The Libyan authorities in Tobruk ask the Arab League for urgent assistance to halt the expansion of Daesh, which spends the month fighting the inhabitants of Sirte for the city's total control. Mauritania approves a new anti-slavery law.*

## Spain

- On 28 August the Civil Guard searches the headquarters of the Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC, Catalan separatist) and its political foundation, CatDem, as part of the court investigation for the 3% corruption case, affecting the President of the regional government Artur Mas.

## France

- On 20 August the French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve and his British counterpart Theresa May sign a cooperation agreement to deal with the migration crisis in Calais, where more than 3,000 illegal immigrants are waiting to cross the channel into the United Kingdom.
- On 21 August the Moroccan Ayub el-Khazzani, suspected in Spain of having jihadist connections, attempts to carry out a massacre on a high-speed train travelling to Paris from Amsterdam, after boarding the train in Brussels armed with a Kalashnikov. The terrorist is subdued by a group of passengers and arrested in Arras.

## Italy

- On 2 August the number of people rescued in the Strait of Sicily rises to 4,000 in 72 hours as a result of constant, mass arrivals on Italian shores, which continue throughout the month.

## Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 27 August the EU-Balkans summit in Vienna focuses on the region's joint commitment to European accession but highlights the need to accelerate and broaden the reforms demanded by Brussels.
- On 27 August the opposition leader in the Republika Srpska claims to have recordings that prove votes were bought in the October 2014 elections by the SNSD, the entity's ruling party.
- On 27 August Bosnia's public prosecutor accuses the former Bosniak General Naser Oric of war crimes against Serbian troops in the Bosnian war.

## Montenegro

- On 13 August Russia includes Montenegro, together with Albania, Liechtenstein and Iceland in the list of states that are banned from exporting foodstuffs to the country in retaliation for sanctions adopted by Podgorica as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

## Serbia

- On 26 August the EU announces it will give 1.5 million euros to assist Serbia and the FYROM to tackle the migration crisis, one of the main issues of the EU-Balkans summit in Vienna on 27 August.

## Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 3 August the Parliament adopts the constitutional amendments necessary for setting up a special court for war crimes committed during the Kosovo conflict. The opposition lodges an appeal with the Constitutional Court asking for the measure, which may see UÇK members go to trial, to be overturned.
- On 14 August a demonstration in Mitrovica calls for the release of Oliver Ivanovic, arrested in January 2014 accused of war crimes and currently on hunger strike pending a definitive verdict from the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX), which extended his custody on 6 August.

- On 25 August Serbia and Kosovo sign new agreements on energy, telecommunications, freedom of movement around the bridge in Mitrovica and to establish a community of Serbian municipalities in North Kosovo.

#### *FYROM*

- On 20 August Skopje declares a state of emergency on its borders with Serbia and Greece due to the avalanche of refugees trying to reach the EU through Hungary.
- On 26 August the government and opposition fail to reach an agreement in Brussels on the appointment of a special prosecutor to investigate accusations of state spying made by the social democrat leader Zoran Zaev, who threatens to release new recordings if an agreement is not reached by 15 September.

#### *Greece*

- On 14 August the Eurogroup approves a third bailout package for Greece of 86 billion euros, to be released over the next three years.
- On 20 August the Prime Minister announces his resignation and early elections to be held in September after just seven months in government and amidst the split in the ruling Syriza party over the terms accepted for the third financial rescue package. The announcement coincides with the release of the first tranche of the new package – 26 billion – and repayments being made to the ECB and IMF.
- On 21 August, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 50,000 refugees arrived in Greece in July 2015; more than in the whole of 2014 (43,500) and a 750% increase from July 2014.
- On 27 August after the three major parliamentary groups fail to form a government to replace Alexis Tsipras, the Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos appoints the President of the Supreme Court Vasiliki Thanou as the caretaker government's Prime Minister.

#### *Turkey*

- On 14 August Turkey begins the construction of a wall in the border prov-

ince of Hatay to halt the increase in illegal immigrants entering from Syria and Iraq.

- On 17-18 August the government sets up around a hundred special security zones in the east and southeast of the country and imposes curfews in Mus and Diyarbakir following fierce clashes with the terrorist organization PKK, which in July and August left at least 53 insurgents dead. In addition, Ankara steps up its bombing throughout August of PKK positions in Turkey and northern Iraq.
- On 21 August the President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announces early elections for 1 November after the current Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (AKP) fails to get the support of the Republican People's Party (CHP, kemalist) or the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, far-right) to continue to govern.

#### *Cyprus*

- On 14 August the representative of the UN Secretary General on Cyprus Espen Barth Eide expresses optimism for the progress made in the reunification negotiations, especially on the subject of natural resources.

#### *Syria*

- On 6 August Daesh takes the town of al-Qaryatain, Homs, located between Palmyra and the Qalamun mountains. Days later, Daesh abducts 230 of the town's residents.
- On 7 August the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopts a resolution that authorizes UN investigators to identify the perpetrators of the attacks using chemical weapons denounced during the Syrian war.
- On 12 August the US carries out its first airstrike on Daesh positions in Syria from Turkey's Incirlik air base.
- On 12, 13 and 14 August Hezbollah and Ahrar ash-Sham announce a ceasefire in Zabadani, close to the Lebanese border, brokered by Turkey and Iran. However, an agreement is not reached for a prisoner exchange.
- On 16 August the Syrian army steps up its bombing of the city of Duma. At least 80 people are killed throughout the day and another 200 are injured.

- On 22 August Daesh destroys the Christian monastery of St. Elian, in Homs.
- On 23 August it is reported that Daesh has destroyed the Baalshamin temple in Palmyra.
- On 31 August Daesh destroys Palmyra's emblematic Baal Temple.

#### *Lebanon*

- On 22 August the citizen protests begun at the end of July over the political stalemate and corruption and the Garbage Crisis in Beirut become large-scale and violent. Dozens of demonstrators are arrested or injured during the intervention by riot police. On 27 August the Prime Minister Tammam Salam calls on the government to urgently resolve the unrest in Beirut. On 29 August 10,000 people demonstrate again in the Lebanese capital.
- On 24 August new clashes break out between Fatah and Jund ash-Sham in the Ain al-Hilweh Palestinian refugee camp.
- On 12 August supporters of the Free Patriotic Movement demonstrate to denounce the marginalization of the rights of Lebanese Christians.

#### *Egypt*

- On 17 August the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi ratifies the anti-terrorist law approved by the government in July that, through its 54 articles, toughens sentences for terrorism, protects security forces and restricts press freedoms.
- On 22 August the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Mohamed Badie and other members of the group are sentenced to life imprisonment for murder and inciting violence in connection with the 2013 Islamist attack on a police station in Port Said.
- On 29 August three Al-Jazeera journalists are sentenced to three years in prison accused of airing false news that jeopardized state security.

#### *Libya*

- On 11 August violent clashes break out in Sirte when its inhabitants try to stop Daesh taking full control of the city. The fighting is sparked by the mur-

der by Daesh of an imam, Sheikh Khalid bin Rajab Ferjani, from the influential al-Farjan tribe. On 15 August Daesh beheads and crucifies 12 local gunmen in the struggle for control of the city. A further 22 fighters from the city are murdered by Daesh members when they are found injured in the city's hospital. Despite Sirte's desperate situation, neither the forces loyal to Tripoli, nor those loyal to Tobruk make any kind of decisive intervention throughout the month.

- On 18 August the Tobruk Parliament asks the Arab League for help in the fight against the expansion of Daesh in Libya. At the same time, the peace talks held in Geneva on 11-12 August and in Skhirat on 27-29 August are silenced by a new outbreak of violence in the country. On 25 August the head of the negotiating delegation from the General National Congress (Tripoli) resigns in protest over Tripoli's refusal to enter into dialogue with the Tobruk government.

#### Tunisia

- On 7 August the President Beji Caïd Essebsi ratifies the anti-terrorism law approved at the end of July by the Parliament with 174 votes in favour, 10 against and no abstentions. The measures include the death penalty for terrorist crimes and prison sentences for publicly defending terrorism. It will also allow security forces to detain suspects for up to 15 days without access to a lawyer or being brought before a judge, as well as making it easier to phone-tap people under investigation.

#### Algeria

- On 26 August the Interior Ministry announces the result of different operations carried out throughout August against the Soldiers of the Caliphate, loyal to Daesh, and AQIM, in the provinces of Jijel and Skikda. At least five terrorists have been killed in the operations.
- On 27 August Madani Mezrag, the pardoned former leader of the Islamic Salvation Front, announces his intention to create a new party, the Algerian Front for Reconciliation and Salvation.

#### Morocco

- On 25 August 14 people suspected of being members of a Daesh recruitment network are arrested in Fez, Casablanca and Madrid in an operation in coordination with the Spanish authorities.

#### Mauritania

- On 6 August the Mauritanian authorities report the release of the Malian Islamist militant and former spokesman for Ansar Dine, Sanda Ould Bouamama, despite being under an international arrest warrant.
- On 13 August the National Assembly approves a draft law comprising 26 articles that considers slavery – officially banned in the country in 1980 but still widely practiced – as a crime against humanity. As well as making it an offence and setting the applicable penalties, the text allows human rights defence associations to denounce infractions and assist victims, one of the central demands of anti-slavery organizations.

#### EU

- On 10 August Brussels announces 'substantial financial aid' – around 2.4 billion euros – to help 23 of the 28 Member States to tackle the largest migration crisis since World War II. Italy, Spain and Greece will be the largest beneficiaries.

#### Arab League

- On 26 August the Arab League announces *sine die* postponement of the meeting scheduled for the following day in which the Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers of its 21 members were planning to approve and sign an agreement for the formation of a joint military force.

### September 2015

*In Spain early elections are held in Catalonia. Greece holds early parliamentary elections. In Turkey, clashes increase between the army and the PKK terrorist organization. The relentless advance of*

*Daesh in Syria prompts Western governments to change strategy with respect to the Syrian regime and Russia initiates its intervention in the country. Public protests continue in Lebanon. In Egypt the cabinet is reshuffled. The two parallel governments in Libya make no advances in negotiations in Morocco. In Tunisia, more than a hundred security force members are sacked for links with terrorism and organized crime. The Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika concludes a reform process of the secret service. Morocco holds local elections. The EU is faced with the division of its members over the mass refugee arrivals from the Middle East.*

#### Portugal

- On 15 September the Bank of Portugal temporarily suspends the sale of Novo Banco, created in August 2014 using the healthy assets of the defunct Banco Espírito Santo, two weeks after the collapse of its sale to the Chinese entity Anbang.

#### Spain

- On 1 September the ruling PP submits a Constitutional Court reform to the Parliament as a matter of urgency, which enables it to fine or suspend anyone not complying with its rulings.
- On 27 September Catalonia holds parliamentary elections in which the pro-independence party *Junts pel Sí* (Together for Yes) wins with 62 seats, although it only wins 39.57% of the votes. The Citizens party (liberal), which wants Catalonia to remain as part of Spain experiences a sharp rise becoming the second most voted party (25 seats, 17.21%), followed by the Socialists' Party of Catalonia (PSC, 16 seats, 12.72%), Catalonia Yes We Can (left-wing, 11 seats, 8.93%), the People's Party (right-wing, 11 seats, 8.5%) and Popular Unity Candidacy (CUP, far-left, 10 seats, 8.21%).
- On 29 September the Catalan President Artur Mas, his Education counselor Irene Rigau and his former vice-President Joana Ortega are charged by the High Court of Catalonia for various crimes after holding a referendum on 9 November 2014 on Catalonia's self-

determination, despite this being the exclusive right of the State.

- On 30 September the new law on national security enters into force that allows the government to take charge of all the administration's personnel and means in case of crisis or an attack on the constitutional order.

#### France

- On 2 September Myriam el-Khomri is appointed Labour Minister to replace François Rebsamen, who is appointed mayor of Dijon.
- On 9 September the National Front is charged with defrauding the State by falsifying its campaign accounts in the 2012 parliamentary elections.
- On 30 September the government unveils the 2016 national budget, which includes tax cuts aimed at lowering the deficit and stabilising the public debt.

#### Italy

- On 19 September the Coast Guard reports they have rescued 4,343 immigrants throughout the day front of the Libyan coastline.
- On 24 September the party of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi reaches an internal agreement on the reform bill for the Senate, which may lead to its approval in the Parliament.

#### Croatia

- On 4 September a consortium of international banks, which includes most of the Croatian banking system, announces it is suing the State over Zagreb's decision, on 25 August, to allow its credit in Swiss francs to be converted into euros to stem the effects of the growth of the Swiss currency.
- On 17 September Croatia receives 5,500 refugees from Serbia in a single day after the closure of the Hungarian border. The mass influx of refugees sparks tensions between Zagreb and Belgrade, who accuse each other of handling the crisis poorly.

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 8 September, after three months of debates, the government adopts the

five-year strategy for the reform of the judicial system, required to advance the European accession process.

#### Montenegro

- On 23 September the former mayor of Bar, Zarko Pavicevic is arrested for abuse of office in a city planning corruption case. His arrest comes a month after those of the mayor of Budva Lazar Radjenovic and his predecessor Rajko Kuljaca, under similar charges.

#### Serbia

- On 3 September the Socialist Party appoints Nikola Sainovic as a member of its cabinet on his return to Belgrade after serving two thirds of his sentence for war crimes in Kosovo.
- On 11 September the Albanian-majority municipalities in southern Serbia announce their intention of creating a union similar to that proposed by the Serb municipalities in Kosovo.

#### Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 23 September UÇK war veterans, who have been demanding payment of a dignified pension for several months, reject the government's offer for unemployed ex-fighters to receive monthly pensions of between 130 and 170 euros and warn they will return to the streets in protest.
- On 29 September Serbia and Kosovo agree on the mutual recognition of their university degrees.

#### FYROM

- On 1 September, in accordance with the government's proposal submitted to the Parliament on 15 July, the Lustration Law, under which people suspected of collaborating with Yugoslavia's socialist regime could be investigated and tried, is repealed.
- On 4 September Austria, Hungary, Serbia and the FYROM sign a memorandum of cooperation to deal with the migrant and refugee crisis.
- On 15 September the Parliament appoints Katica Janeva as special prosecutor to investigate the illegal phone-

tapping scandal denounced by the opposition.

#### Albania

- On 5 September the socialist lawmaker Armando Prenga is arrested under charges of shooting and injuring a fisherman during a brawl over the fishing rights in a lagoon in Lac.
- On 5 September the socialist lawmaker Arben Ndoka resigns from his party after the opposition reveals that he was sentenced in Italy for human trafficking in 2003.

#### Greece

- On 8 September the trial is resumed against the leadership of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party.
- On 13 September the caretaker Prime Minister Vasiliki Zanou announces the opening of two new reception centres in Athens and Salonica during a visit to Lesbos, the main port of entry for immigrants coming from the Middle East.
- On 20 September Syriza wins Greece's early parliamentary elections with 35.46% of the votes and 145 seats. New Democracy, led by Evangelos Meimarakis, takes second position (28.1% of the votes, 75 seats). Golden Dawn comes third (6.99%, 18 seats). PASOK finishes fourth (6.23%, 17 seats).
- On 22 September Alexis Tsipras, reelected as Prime Minister, announces the formation of his new cabinet, again a Syriza – ANEL coalition. Euclides Tsakalotos remains as Finance Minister and Olga Gerovasili as spokeswoman. Nikos Kotzias also remains at the helm of the Foreign Ministry and the ANEL leader Panos Kamenos stays on as Defence Minister.
- On 24 September the new deputy Minister for Transport Dimitris Kamenos resigns hours after being sworn in over anti-semitic, racist and homophobic posts he made on *Twitter*.

#### Turkey

- On 2 September the Turkish air force bombs new PKK positions in the south-east of the country following the murder

of a Turkish soldier in the area. There have been constant clashes in the area since the terrorist organization ended two years of truce with Ankara at the end of July.

- On 3 September the Parliament votes in favour of the government proposal to extend the mandate that enables troops to be deployed in Syria and Iraq by another year.
- On 7 September Turkish Islamist nationalists set fire to nine provincial offices of the People's Democratic Party (HDP, left-wing, pro-kurdish), lynch a group of Kurdish workers in Ankara and attack buses owned by Kurdish companies in retaliation for the PKK terrorist campaign. The HDP condemns the PKK's attacks and continues to call the terrorist organization to unconditionally lay down its arms, but sees how the renewed war between the terrorist organization and security forces is complicating its options in the upcoming legislative elections.
- On 17 September the public prosecutor seeks a 34-year prison sentence for the influential Islamist preacher and political enemy of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Fethullah Gülen, for charges of conspiracy, forgery of official documents and slander. The public prosecutor also demands prison sentences of up to 26 years for another 32 people suspected of belonging to Gülen's network, which is described by Ankara as a parallel state.

#### *Cyprus*

- On 24 September Rikkos Erotokritou is sacked as deputy attorney general by the Supreme Court for inappropriate behaviour when he accused the attorney general Costas Clerides of bribery and abuse of office, for which Erotokritou himself is currently being investigated.

#### *Syria*

- On 4 September Daesh destroys three ancient tombs in Palmyra, built between 103 and 44 B.C..
- On 7 September the US expresses its concern over Russia sending a military advance team to support Bashar al-Assad's forces in Latakia. The negotiations between Washington and Mos-

cow for a solution to the Syrian conflict hinge on question of removing Assad from power.

- On 8 September clashes break out between the Syrian army and Daesh for control of the Jazal oil fields.
- On 9 September Syrian troops withdraw from the Abu al-Duhur military airfield.
- On 17 September the Syrian army bomb al-Raqqa, Daesh's headquarters in Syria since 2013.
- On 27 September the French army joins the airstrikes against Daesh.
- On 27 September the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani declares that "everyone has accepted" that Bashar al-Assad should remain in power to fight against the growing threat of Daesh. His comments coincide with a change in Western leaders' stance with respect to the dictator remaining in power.
- On 30 September the Russian Senate unanimously approves the use of its air force in Syria.

#### *Lebanon*

- On 2 September around 40 activists from the *#YouStink* movement, set up in response to the Garbage Crisis to denounce political ineffectiveness and corruption, are removed by security forces from the offices of the Environment Minister. On 9 September the government agrees on an emergency plan to deal with the crisis, which hands waste management over to local municipalities and open two new landfills in Akkar and Masnaa.

#### *Egypt*

- On 7 September the Agriculture Minister Salah Helal is arrested for his alleged connection to a bribery scandal involving government officials. Hours earlier Helal had stepped down from his post.
- On 12 September the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi accepts the full resignation of the government submitted by the Prime Minister Ibrahim Mehleb amid a wave of corruption scandals affecting various cabinet members.
- On 19 September the members of the new government are sworn in by the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. The new

cabinet, led by the former Petroleum Minister Sherif Ismail maintains the previous government's ministers of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Defence, Investment, Finance, Justice, Water Resources, Antiquities and Supply. Ahmed Zaki Badr, Education Minister in the last year of Hosni Mubarak's rule, is appointed Minister of Local Development and Hisham Zaazou returns to the helm of the Tourism Ministry, a post he occupied during Morsi's rule and until March 2015. Tarek el-Molla, the former chairman of Egypt's state-owned oil company, is appointed Minister of Petroleum.

- On 24 September Abdel Fattah el-Sisi grants pardons for a hundred prisoners on the eve of the celebration of Eid al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice). Among those pardoned are the Al-Jazeera journalists Mohamed Fahmy and Baher Mohamed.

#### *Libya*

- On 15 September the Parliament in Tobruk rejects the amendments proposed by the Islamist government in Tripoli to the plan presented by the UN to reach a political agreement and orders its delegation to leave the negotiations in the Moroccan town of Skhirat, five days before the deadline set by the UN Special Representative in Libya Bernardino Leon.

#### *Tunisia*

- On 16 September 110 security officers are sacked under suspicion of having links to terrorist groups and organized crime.

#### *Algeria*

- On 13 September the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika concludes the reform of the secret services, begun in 2013, with the dismissal of Mohamed Mediene, head of the Intelligence and Security Department (DRS).

#### *Morocco*

- On 4 September Morocco holds local elections which, with a 53% turnout, reveal a surge in popularity of Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane's Islamist

Justice and Development Party (PJD), especially in urban areas, after the party wins control of Casablanca, Tangier, Rabat, Fez and Agadir. The PJD obtains 16% of the seats, three times more than in the 2009 municipal elections. The Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM, centre-right) takes 6,655 seats in local councils (21% of the seats) and the conservative Istiqlal wins 5,106 seats (16% of the seats).

#### EU

- On 4-5 September Luxembourg calls the Union's Foreign Ministers to adopt urgent measures to deal with the migration crisis and prepare the summit of Heads of State and Government on 14 September, which fails to reach any kind of agreement for the redistribution of the 160,000 refugees over the next two years, or even an agreement without an established timeframe, mandatory quotas or obligations.
- On 9 September the EC approves the mandatory relocation of a total of 160,000 refugees and a mechanism for fining countries that refuse to accept them.
- On 23 September the EU reaches an agreement, validated by the European Parliament on the relocation of 120,000 refugees, mostly Syrians. Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia are not part of the relocation scheme.
- On 28 September the EU authorizes the second phase of Operation Sophia aimed at tackling migrant trafficking in the Mediterranean, which allows vessels using international waters to be intercepted, seized or destroyed as of 7 October.

#### October 2015

*Portugal holds parliamentary elections. The main Spanish parties reach an agreement on principle on national unity. The Italian and Greek governments approve the budgets for 2016. Slovenia, Croatia and Greece face mass refugee arrivals from the Middle East, as does the FYROM, which is also seeking, through EU mediation, to end a political crisis between the government and opposition. Montenegro and Kosovo are*

*also still engulfed in problems of governability. Instability increases in Turkey over the proximity of the Syrian conflict, the reactivation of the fight against the PKK and political polarization. Russian intervention in Syria leads to advances made by the regime and at the end of the month an international summit on Syria is held, which concludes with a commitment to negotiate for a transitional government, but without reaching an agreement on Bashar al-Assad's immediate exit from power. Egypt holds the two rounds of the first phase of parliamentary elections. In Libya, and without the presence of the General National Congress in Tripoli, the United Nations mediation team presents a new proposal to form a national unity government. The EU and Tunisia launch negotiations for a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement.*

#### Portugal

- On 4 October Portugal holds parliamentary elections in which the centre-right coalition Portugal Ahead, comprising the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the CDS – People's Party (CDS-PP) wins 99 of the 230 seats in Parliament with 36.8% of the votes. The Socialist Party (PS) are close behind with 85 seats, 32.38% of the votes. After come the Left Bloc (BE) (19 seats, 10.22%) and the Unitary Democratic Coalition (CDU) of the Communist Party (PC) and Ecologist Party – Greens (PEV) – 17 seats, 8.27%.
- On 22 October the President Anibal Cavaco Silva reappoints the outgoing Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho (PSD) at the head of a new government of 15 ministries, two newly created, which takes office on 29 October as a minority-led government.

#### Spain

- On 20 October the Parliament approves the state budget for 2016, based on a 3% growth forecast, despite misgivings from Brussels.
- On 21 October Andreu Viloca, treasurer of Democratic Convergence of Catalonia (CDC, Catalan separatist) is arrested in the 3% corruption scandal that is affecting numerous officials and

members of the party of the regional President Artur Mas.

- On 27 October the National Police raid the homes of the former Catalan President Jordi Pujol (CDC) and those of three of his children in the biggest police operation in the corruption probe affecting the family of Catalonia's ruler for 23 years.
- On 30 October the Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy announces the agreement between the country's main parties to safeguard national unity, faced with the plans of the Catalan separatist parties to vote in the regional parliament on a text to open a process of unilateral secession.

#### France

- On 3 October around a hundred immigrants storm the Eurotunnel in an attempt to get to the United Kingdom, forcing its closure for several hours.
- On 23 October the government announces measures to improve health-care for the nearly 6,000 irregular immigrants camped in Calais hoping to cross over to the United Kingdom.

#### Italy

- On 9 October Ignazio Marino (PD) resigns as mayor of Rome. Marino has been involved in numerous scandals, including being suspected of involvement with organized crime in the area, poor management, misuse and misappropriation of public funds.
- On 13 October more than 700 migrants are rescued in Italian waters by *Médicins Sans Frontières*.
- On 13 October the Senate approves, by 178 votes in favour, 16 against and seven abstentions, its transformation into a consultative assembly of 100 senators – as opposed to the current 315 – putting an end to the perfect bicameralism in place since 1947.
- On 15 October the government approves the budget for 2016 which includes major tax cuts in view of signs of the country's economic growth.

#### Slovenia

- On 21 October the Parliament adopts amendments to the Defence



Law that allows the army, together with police, to control the massive influx of refugees.

- On 23 October the government announces that it is considering building a border fence with Croatia to contain the mass migrant arrivals trying to reach Austria and other places in the Union.

#### *Croatia*

- On 16 October Croatia announces an agreement reached with Slovenia to initiate the joint management of migrants and refugees arriving on their soils as soon as Hungary proceeds with the imminent closure of the fence that delineates the Hungarian-Croatian border.

#### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

- On 6 October the opposition Union for a Better Future (SBB, conservative) announces its full support for the reform agenda of the government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina putting an end to months of political turmoil in the Bosnian-Croat entity.
- On 6 October four Bosnians are sentenced to between one and three years in jail for belonging to a terrorist organization and recruiting jihadists to fight in Syria and Iraq, in the country's first such conviction.

#### *Montenegro*

- On 6 October hundreds of people called by the opposition Democratic Front (DF, conservative, Serbian pro-unionist) demonstrate in 15 different towns to demand the resignation of the Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic and his government, who they accuse of election fraud. The protests add to those ongoing since 27 September in Podgorica. On 18 October demonstrators give the government an ultimatum to step down and call early elections, while clashes with police continue leaving at least 39 people injured on 24 October in Podgorica.

#### *Serbia*

- On 23 October the Constitutional Court's decision taken on 9 April to terminate the Law on Public Gatherings, because it is deemed not to conform

with the constitution, enters into force without an alternative law being approved.

#### *Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244*

- On 12 October there are protests and unrest in Pristina sparked by the arrest and interrogation of Albin Kurti, leader of the ultranationalist *Vetëvendosje* party, for throwing tear gas in the Parliament on 8 October in protest against the implementation of the agreement to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia. On 15 October the Parliament is evacuated after another gas canister is thrown by a *Vetëvendosje* MP.
- On 12 October a hand grenade is thrown at the home of the mayor of Leposavic Dragan Jablanovic, father of the former Minister Aleksandar Jablanovic, against a backdrop of growing tensions within the Kosovo Serb political bloc following the dismissal on 29 September of Aleksandar Jablanovic as leader of the Srpska Lista – member of the coalition governing Kosovo – accused of holding a secret meeting with the Prime Minister Hashim Thaçi to support the creation of a Kosovo army.
- On 27 October Kosovo signs its Association and Stabilisation Agreement with the EU, paving the way to its future accession candidacy.

#### *FYROM*

- On 9 October more than 10,000 refugees and migrants from the Middle East arrive at the country's border in a new wave of arrivals that began the previous day. Skopje asks the EU for assistance warning that its capacity to deal with the massive influx is stretched to its limit.
- On 30 October the EC announces that its recommendation for the start of accession talks could depend on the conclusion of an agreement between the FYROM government and opposition to put an end to the country's political crisis and implement the opposition demands: electoral reform before the early elections scheduled for 16 April 2016, agreed in July 2015, and the appointment of a caretaker government,

with the participation of the opposition, to prepare said elections.

#### *Greece*

- On 4 October Nikos Voutsis, former Interior Minister, is elected Speaker of the Parliament to replace Zoe Constantopoulou, who left Syriza in opposition to the third bailout package to create the party Popular Unity.
- On 5 October the government unveils the budget for 2016, which includes pension cuts, an income tax reform and a harsher tax system for farmers, as a trade-off for the EU and IMF's 86-billion-euro aid package.
- On 29 - 30 October around 400 migrants arrive in Lesbos, Kalymnos and Rhodes in two days in which 40 migrants lose their lives. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) sets the number of migrants and refugees that have arrived in Greece since January 2015 at 527,000. In total, more than 700,000 have arrived on the shores of the Union after crossing the Mediterranean. A further 3,200 have lost their lives attempting the journey.
- On 31 October the ECB asks the four largest banks in Greece to justify the 14.4-billion-euro debt they have accumulated and explain how they can guarantee its repayment.

#### *Turkey*

- On 1 October Ahmet Hakan, a *Hürriyet* and *CNN Türk* reporter critical of the AKP government, is assaulted in Istanbul by four men thought to be party supporters.
- On 10 October at least 95 people are killed and 246 injured in Ankara in two Daesh suicide bomb attacks, the most deadly in the country's history.
- On 26 October at least two Turkish police officers are killed in an operation against Daesh in the Kayapinar district in Diyarbakir.
- On 28 October police in Istanbul storm the offices of *Koza Ipek*, a media group critical of the government and close to the movement of preacher Fethullah Gülen, and cut broadcasts of the *Kanaltürk* and *Bugün TV* television channels, just days after the parliamentary elections.

### Syria

- On 4 October Daesh destroys Palmyra's Arch of Triumph.
- On 6 October the Russian air force bombs Daesh positions in Palmyra, al-Bab and Deir Hafer, Aleppo.
- On 7 October Russia bombs the strategic town of Talbiseh, in preparation for its advance on Homs.
- On 8 October Russian-backed Syrian troops begin a major offensive to take back control of the west of the country from rebel hands.
- On 9 October the US axes its plan to set up a 500-million-dollar programme to train 5,400 moderate rebels fighting against Bashar al-Assad.
- On 16 October the Syrian army launches an offensive to take back Aleppo.
- On 21 October Tel Abyad, liberated from Daesh by Kurdish fighters (*peshmergas*) in June is declared part of the Kurdish self-government in northern Syria.
- On 30 October the participating countries in the international summit in Vienna on Syria, attended by Iran but not the opposition to the Syrian regime, agree to cooperate to establish a national unity government to pave the way to a democratic transition. Participants fail to agree on a stance on the future of the President Bashar al-Assad.

### Lebanon

- On 8 October police use water cannons to disperse demonstrators protesting in the streets of Beirut against a government they say is corrupt and ineffective.

### Jordan

- On 23 October Russia and Jordan agree to coordinate their military operations in Syria, including those of their air forces, out of a coordination centre in Amman.

### Egypt

- On 15 October Egypt is elected as a non-permanent member of the Security Council together with Ukraine, Uruguay, Japan and Senegal.

- On 18-19 October the first round takes place of the first phase (Upper Egypt and West Delta) of the parliamentary elections to the new unicameral parliament composed of 596 seats – 448 for individual candidates, 120 for party lists and 28 selected by the President. The banned Muslim Brotherhood do not participate, although there are independent candidates with links to the ousted Mubarak regime.
- On 21 October Tarek Amer is appointed governor of the Central Bank of Egypt to replace Hisham Ramez.
- On 26-27 October the second round is held of the first phase of parliamentary elections. After the vote count of both rounds the results give victory in the first phase to the Free Egyptians Party (liberal) with 41 seats, followed by the Nation's Future Party (pro-Sisi) with 26 seats.
- On 31 October flight KGL-9268 operated by the Russian airline Kogalymavia, travelling from Sharm el-Sheik to Saint Petersburg, explodes in the air over the Sinai Peninsula, killing all 224 passengers and crew. Daesh claims to be behind the tragedy.

### Libya

- On 9 October the Special UN Representative Bernardino Leon announces a proposal in the Moroccan town of Skhirat for a Libyan national unity government pending approval of the Tripoli and Tobruk parliaments. This new cabinet will be headed by Faiz Serraj as Prime Minister. The announcement comes without the presence of the General National Congress in Tripoli, which demands new amendments to the peace plan presented by the United Nations before supporting any kind of unity government.

### Tunisia

- On 6 October the police disband three Daesh recruitment cells in Libya.
- On 13 October the EU and Tunisia officially start negotiations for a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement.

### EU

- On 25 October the EC and its Member States hold an emergency meeting

with representatives of the Western Balkans to address the tensions caused by the flow of refugees. The meeting proposes the creation of 100,000 places for refugees in centres across the Balkan countries, although there is still disagreement over how to manage and control the arrival, transit and relocation of the migrants.

### November 2015

*In Portugal, the parties on the left agree on a coalition to form a government. In Spain, the Catalan Parliament approves a declaration in favour of secession. In France, a chain of Daesh attacks shakes Paris. The attack causes France to enter the military offensive in Syria and leads the EU to step up security measures. In Italy, the Mafia Capital trial opens. Malta hosts an EU-Africa summit on the migration crisis. Slovenia begins construction of a border fence. Croatia holds parliamentary elections. The political crisis continues in Montenegro and Kosovo. In the FYROM, the government and opposition reach an agreement to settle the political crisis. In Greece, there is a general strike against the new austerity measures. Tensions rise between Turkey and Russia over the downing of a Russian fighter jet. Turkey also holds parliamentary elections and manages to resume EU accession negotiations in exchange for committing to keep refugees in the country. In Lebanon, Daesh carried out an attack in Beirut. Egypt continues with its parliamentary elections. In Tunisia, Daesh attacks a presidential guard bus. In Algeria, a senior military intelligence figure is sacked.*

### Portugal

- On 10 November the recently formed government of Pedro Passos Coelho is toppled after losing a confidence vote tabled by the left-wing opposition.
- On 24 November the Secretary General of the Socialist Party Antonio Costa is appointed Prime Minister, becoming the first person to govern Portugal without winning elections thanks to the joint support of the country's left-wing forces.

### Spain

- On 9 November the Catalan Parliament approves a declaration in favour of secession from the rest of Spain with 72 votes of its 135 deputies.

### France

- On 13 November at least 130 people are killed and over 400 injured in five coordinated Daesh attacks in Paris. The President François Hollande declares a state of emergency, stepping up security and carrying out raids in the country's largest cities in search of the terrorists that survived the attacks, most of whom were from Belgium, where security measures are also tightened. On 18 November two jihadists are killed during an anti-terrorism operation in Saint Denis in connection with the attacks.
- On 24 November the Salafist imam Olivier Corel, known as the white emir and suspected mentor of Mohamed Merah, perpetrator of the attack on a Jewish school in Toulouse in 2012, is arrested for the illegal possession of arms and handed down a six-month suspended prison sentence.
- On 25 November the Prime Minister Manuel Valls says that the EU can accept no more refugees without the Union being endangered by the growing divide among Member States on how to manage the mass arrivals.

### Italy

- On 5 November the trial begins against 46 people in the Mafia Capital probe, an investigation that uncovered an extensive criminal network in Rome which had infiltrated the City Hall and was embezzling public funds.
- On 19 November Italy tightens its security measures following warnings of possible terrorist attacks.

### Malta

- On 3 November the former Health Minister Joe Cassar gives up his seat in the Parliament after being implicated in the Gaffarena corruption scandal.
- On 11 November more than 60 Heads of State and Government from EU and African countries attend a sum-

mit in Valletta to address the problem of mass migration to Europe.

- On 17 November the MP Marlene Farrugia resigns as member of the labour parliamentary group after voting against her own party, currently in government, on two amendments to the Environment Protection Act.

### Slovenia

- On 11 November construction begins on a border fence with Croatia faced with the large-scale arrival of refugees travelling to Austria and Germany.

### Croatia

- On 8 November the conservative Patriotic Coalition wins parliamentary elections narrowly beating Croatia is Growing, the coalition led by the ruling Social Democratic Party.
- On 13 November Croatia asks the EU for urgent assistance to tackle the large number of refugees arriving in the country following the closure of the Slovenian, Austrian and Hungarian borders.
- On 19 November Croatia, Serbia and the FYROM start to enforce limits on the entry of refugees.
- On 25 November the former Prime Minister Ivo Sanader is released by the Supreme Court, which orders him to be retried for corruption due to procedural errors in the original trial.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 4 November the Bosnian and Serbian governments hold their first joint session in Sarajevo.
- On 5 November a court in Sarajevo sentences the Salafist preacher Husein Bosnic to seven years' imprisonment for inciting terrorism.
- On 18 November Enes Omeragic, member of the Bosnian Wahhabi movement, opens fire in a betting shop killing two soldiers and shoots at a bus shouting "Allah is great."

### Montenegro

- On 30 November the EU agrees to mediate the political crisis between the government and opposition, which has been the cause of protests and clashes

in the last two months over the coalition government's decision to delay implementing the new election law.

### Serbia

- On 6 November the government promises to ensure the viability of the recently defunct public news agency *Tanjug*, which closed down for business under the law passed in August 2014 which requires the State to withdraw from media ownership.
- On 20 November NATO lifts restrictions on Serbian airspace imposed during the Kosovo conflict.

### Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 9 November Kosovo fails to attain the minimum of 95 votes in Unesco's General Conference to become a member of the organization.
- On 10 November the Constitutional Court partially suspends the application of the agreement signed with Serbia on the rights of the Serb-majority areas in Kosovo to self-governance.
- On 17-18 November violence breaks out in Pristina during a demonstration against the arrest of *Vetëvendosje* deputy Donika Kadaj-Bujupi for throwing a teargas cannister in the Parliament, in protest against the agreement with Serbia to give greater autonomy to Kosovo Serb areas. On 30 November the party leader Albin Kurti is arrested again for a similar action and clashes break out involving members of the party, which organizes protests against the agreement throughout the month.

### FYROM

- On 6 November the government and social democratic opposition reach an agreement to end the country's political crisis and implement the agreement signed in July to appoint a new unity government to prepare early elections scheduled for April 2016, in accordance with a new election law.

### Albania

- On 20 November the leaders of the Muslim community ask the State to help

tighten controls on certain radical mosques in the country.

#### Greece

- On 12 November there is unrest in Athens during the general strike against the austerity measures adopted by the government in its negotiations with the EU and IMF, which resumed the previous day, to release a fresh tranche of 2 billion euros for back payments and a further 10 billion euros for the four largest Greek banks.

#### Turkey

- On 1 November Turkey holds early parliamentary elections in which the ruling AKP wins with 49.4% of the votes and 316 of the 550 seats in the Parliament.
- On 2 November Murat Çapan and Cevheri Güven, editor and director of the magazine *Notka*, are arrested suspected of preparing a coup.
- On 4 November at least 18 people are killed in fighting in the southeast of the country after the army launches airstrikes against the PKK and declares a curfew in Hani and Lice, Diyarbakir.
- On 5 November 16 militants from the PKK terrorist organization are killed in bombing in Yuksekova.
- On 5 November the PKK announces it is ending the ceasefire it has observed since 10 October.
- On 6 November 20 people accused of belonging to Daesh are arrested in Antalya a week before the G20 summit.
- On 6 November the police raid the offices of the *Tuskon* business confederation in Ankara, linked to the preacher Fethullah Gülen who government accuses of heading a conspiracy organization parallel to the State.
- On 11 November the army enters the majority-Kurdish Silvan to quell almost two weeks of popular uprising led by militants from the PKK terrorist organization.
- On 15-16 November Antalya hosts the G20 summit, which agrees on a joint statement reiterating a readiness to collaborate in the fight against terrorism.
- On 24 November tensions rise between Russia and Turkey after the Turkish army downs a Russian fighter jet,

which, according to Ankara, was flying over Turkish airspace unauthorized. Russia ensures that the aggression will not alter its intervention in Syria. On 28 November Russia orders economic sanctions on Turkey and suspends visa exemption for Turkish citizens as of 1 January 2016.

- On 27 November Can Dündar, director of the centre-left newspaper *Hürriyet*, and the head of the newspaper's office in Ankara Erdem Gül are jailed for publishing images in May of an MIT convoy (Turkish intelligence agency) being stopped and inspected by a prosecutor linked with Fethullah Gülen as it was travelling to Syria loaded with weapons.
- On 28 November Tahir Elçi, President of the Diyarbakir Bar Association and activist for a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish conflict is shot dead during an appearance before the press.

#### Cyprus

- On 3 November more than a hundred Syrian and Palestinian refugees detained in the British Dhekelia military base demand a solution to their situation and denounce the conditions they are living in.
- On 18 November four Greek Cypriots are arrested accused of attacks against Turkish Cypriots in Nicosia on 16 November during student protests against the commemoration of the Turkish Cypriot unilateral declaration of independence in 1983.
- On 19 November Cyprus offers France the use of its bases in its intervention against Daesh.

#### Syria

- On 4 November the army takes control from Daesh of the only highway that connects Aleppo with the centre of the country.
- On 10 November the army and Russian air support break Daesh's three-year siege of the Kweiris military base in Aleppo.
- On 13 November the Syrian army take the rebel stronghold of al-Hader, Aleppo.
- On 15 November 12 planes from the French air force bomb Daesh positions in al-Raqqa, on the first French offensive

since the massacre in Paris two days previous.

- On 19 November China confirms the execution of Fan Jinghui, the first Chinese hostage murdered by Daesh and promises it will "resolutely crack down" on those responsible.

#### Lebanon

- On 12 November a double bomb attack carried out by Daesh in Beirut's shiite neighbourhood Bourj el-Barajneh leaves at least 41 dead and 200 injured.

#### Jordan

- On 9 November a police officer kills two US military instructors and a South African in a training camp in al-Muwaqqar, Amman.

#### Egypt

- On 4 November at least six police officers are killed in a suicide attack in al-Arish, in North Sinai.
- On 22-23 November the first round of the second phase of parliamentary elections is held (Central and East Delta).
- On 24 November at least seven people are killed in an attack by Wilayat Sinai, a local branch of Daesh, in al-Arish.

#### Libya

- On 4 November the UN announces the replacement of the Spanish diplomat Bernardino Leon by the German Martin Kobler as Special Representative in Libya.
- On 14 November US military sources report that Daesh positions in Libya have been bombed possibly killing the terrorist group's leader in the country, known as Abu Nabil al-Anbari.

#### Tunisia

- On 4 November 30 parliamentarians from the ruling party Nidaa Tunis suspend their membership and threaten to leave the party definitively in the split between the factions led by Hafedh Caïd Essebsi, son of the current President Beji Caïd Essebsi, and

the party's Secretary General Mohsen Marzouk.

- On 17 November the Interior Minister reports the arrest of a jihadist cell composed of 17 terrorists that were planning imminent attacks in Sousse.
- On 24 November at least 12 people are killed in a suicide attack on a presidential guard bus.
- On 27 November the authorities arrest around 40 people and put a further 90 under house arrest suspected of returning from fighting for Daesh in Syria and Iraq.

#### Algeria

- On 26 November a military court sentences the former head of counter-terrorism Abdelkader Ait Ouarab to five years' imprisonment for destroying official documents and arms trafficking.
- On 30 November, despite the opposition's outright rejection, the Parliament approves the budget for 2016 with major cuts to counteract the damaging effect of the fall in oil and gas prices on the economy.

#### Morocco

- On 6 November, the 40th anniversary of the Green March, Mohammed VI pardons 215 Sahrawi prisoners. A further 218 have their sentences reduced.
- On 16 November the Interior Ministry reports the dismantling of a Daesh-linked terrorist cell in Beni Mellal.

#### EU

- On 5 November the EC announces that it expects three million refugees to arrive from the Middle East and Africa between now and 2017.
- On 17 November the European Defence Agency gives its unanimous backing to the French request to activate article 42.7 of the community treaties on the Member States' mutual defence.
- On 20 November the Interior Ministers of the European Council agree to increase controls of the external borders. The measure also affects citizens from the Schengen area.
- On 29 November the EU-Turkey summit relaunches the accession process in exchange for Ankara containing

the flow of refugees, for which the Member States offer Turkey a 3-billion-euro aid package.

#### December 2015

*Spain holds a general election and France regional elections. Slovenia rejects same-sex marriage in a public referendum. Croatia appoints Tihomir Oreskovic as the new Prime Minister. The Republika Srpska suspends cooperation with the Bosnian public prosecutor. Montenegro is extended a formal invitation to join NATO against a backdrop of political instability in the country. Serbia sacks its Defence Minister. Demonstrations in Kosovo continue against the agreements with Montenegro and Serbia. In the FYROM, the government and opposition agree on the composition of a new election commission. There is a general strike in Greece in the same month that new tranches of the international financial rescue package are released. Clashes continue between the Turkish security forces and the PKK terrorist organization. In Syria, Russia steps up bombing in the same month that Riyadh hosts a new meeting of Syrian opposition groups. The Lebanese government approves measures to try to resolve the Garbage Crisis. Egypt concludes its legislative elections. The Libyan governments of Tobruk and Tripoli reach an agreement to put an end to the country's divide. The Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.*

#### Portugal

On 23 December the Parliament approves the amended budget for 2015 to include more than 2 billion euros to prevent the bankruptcy of the *Banif* bank, despite the Socialist Party's left-wing government members voting against it.

#### Spain

- On 2 December the Constitutional Court annuls the unilateral secession declaration of the Catalan regional Parliament.

- On 20 December Spain holds parliamentary elections with a high turnout of 73.2%. The current President Mariano Rajoy's party, the PP, wins with 123 deputies in the congress and 124 seats in the Senate. PSOE comes second with 90 deputies and 47 senators. The new reformist parties make a strong start in the Parliament: Podemos, (left-wing, 63 deputies, 14 senators) and Citizens (liberal, 40 deputies).

#### France

- On 6 and 13 December France holds regional elections. The National Front is the second most voted party in six regions in the first round, but in the second fails to take victory in any region. The joint lists of the right-wing parties formed by The Republicans (LR) and the Union of Democrats and Independents (UDI) will govern in seven of the 13 regions. The different left-wing alliances, headed by the Socialist Party win in five regions. Victory in Corsica goes to the nationalists.
- On 17 December the National Assembly definitively approves the general budget for 2016, which aims to set the public deficit at around 3.3% as compared with 3.8% in 2015, with savings of 15 billion euros on subsidies, aid and public works, compensated in part with an income tax cut that will cost the State around 2.1 billion euros.
- On 23 December the government announces that plans to review the constitution announced by the President François Hollande will include stripping French-born citizens accused of terrorism of French nationality.

#### Italy

- On 4 December the police arrest nine members of the 'Ndrangheta clan in Venice and seize 130 kilos of cocaine in the biggest operation carried out against the Calabrian mafia's trafficking of the drug, which has monopolized the city's drug dealing.
- On 18 December the Minister of Constitutional Reforms and Parliamentary Relations Maria Elena Boschi survives a confidence vote tabled by the opposition over accusations of a conflict of interests in the financial bailout of

Banca Marche, Banca Etruria, CariChieti and CariFe.

- On 23 December the Senate approves the General Budget for 2016 of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, the most expansive since 2001, which foresees major tax cuts, against the EC's recommendations, and a drop in the deficit to 2.4%, rather than the 1.8% demanded by Brussels.

#### Malta

- On 10 December the Maltese Muslim community protests in Valletta against Daesh and Jihadist terrorism.

#### Slovenia

- On 20 December Slovenians reject the law on same-sex marriage approved by the Parliament with 63.48% of the votes.

#### Croatia

- On 23 December the technocrat candidate, favoured by conservatives and reformists, Tihomir Oreskovic is appointed Prime Minister by the President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic to form a coalition government after the 8 November elections.

#### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- On 10 December the Republika Srpska suspends all cooperation with the federal public prosecutor after five Bosnian Serbs are arrested accused of war crimes during the Bosnian war.
- On 11 December the first meeting of the Stabilisation and Association Council between Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EU is held.
- On 21 December Sonja Karadzic-Jovicevic, daughter of the former Bosnian Serb leader tried by the ICTY Radovan Karadzic and member of the opposition SDS party, is elected deputy speaker of the Bosnian Serb Parliament after a long and tense process, replacing Nenad Stevandic, who has left the SDS.
- On 22 December 11 people are arrested in Sarajevo under suspicion of jihadist terrorism in a large-scale police operation.

- On 31 December Borislav Paravac, former Bosnian Serb member of the federal tripartite presidency, is charged with taking part in an attack on Dobojo and Teslic in 1992 and 1993 that killed hundreds of Bosniaks and Croats.

#### Montenegro

- On 1 December the public prosecutor presses charges against the former mayor of Budva Lazar Radjenovic for corruption in relation to construction works.
- On 2 December Montenegro is formally invited to join NATO in a timeframe of two years against a backdrop of internal instability in the country and tension with Russia, which warns that the measure will have its repercussions. NATO also reiterates its hopes for the future membership of Bosnia, Georgia and the FYROM.
- On 20 December the opposition coalition led by the DF protests calling for a new election law and the formation of a transition government to organize early elections.
- On 21 December the EU opens two new accession negotiation chapters – transport and energy.

#### Serbia

- On 14 December the second Serbia-EU Accession conference opens negotiations of chapter 34 – financial control – and part of chapter 35 – the normalization of relations with Kosovo.

#### Kosovo under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244

- On 14 December ultranationalist deputies from *Vetëvendosje* use tear-gas again in the Parliament to demand the suspension of agreements to normalize relations with Serbia.
- On 16 December Kosovo is excluded from the expansion of countries allowed visa-free travel to the EU – Ukraine and Georgia.
- On 23 December the Constitutional Court declares that part of the agreements on the normalization of relations with Serbia and Herzegovina are illegal.

#### FYROM

- On 15 December the government and opposition agree on the members of the new election commission that will organize the elections in April 2016.
- On 21 December the Health Minister Nikola Todorov survives a confidence vote on the poor conditions of the country's hospitals.

#### Albania

- On 9 December a demonstration demanding compensation for crimes committed during the dictatorship of Enver Hoxha turns violent when several demonstrators try to destroy a bunker from the communist era.
- On 17 December the Parliament approves the law to decriminalize politics that prevents anyone with a criminal record or previous involvement in corruption cases to hold public office.
- On 17 December the opposition, led by the Democratic Party, stages a protest calling for the resignation of Edi Rama's government, coinciding with the parliamentary vote on the 2016 budget.

#### Greece

- On 3 December the trade unions stage a general strike, the second since Alexis Tsipras took over as Prime Minister in January 2015, calling for the suspension of the reforms to the pension system demanded for the third bailout of the Greek economy.
- On 4 December Greece announces the activation of the EU's civil protection mechanism, its approval of the action taken by Frontex on its border with the FYROM and its request for the deployment of a rapid border intervention team (RABIT).
- On 8 December the ESM releases 2.71 billion euros to recapitalize the Bank of Greece. On 11 December an agreement is reached for the release of an additional 1 billion euros in aid in exchange for a commitment to new economic reforms, which on 15 December receive parliamentary approval.
- On 23 December the Parliament approves civil partnerships for same-sex couples.

### Turkey

- On 2 December the ECHR rules that Turkey's systematic blocks on *Youtube* without legal grounds violate freedom of expression and the right to information.
- On 3 December Russia suspends negotiations with Turkey to build the *Turkish Stream* gas pipeline, amid rising tensions between Moscow and Ankara over the Syrian conflict.
- On 14 December the 11th Turkey-EU Accession Conference opens negotiations of chapter 17 – economic and monetary policy.
- On 18 December 54 PKK militants are killed in four days of fighting with the army in Cizre and Silopi, on the Syrian border. The fighting with the terrorist organization goes on throughout the month, as well as the attacks on Turkish soldiers.

### Syria

- On 3 December the United Kingdom launches its first offensive in Syria.
- On 10 December the main opposition factions in Syria meet in Riyadh and agree to initiate negotiations with representatives of the Syrian regime, in accordance with the communiqué of the Geneva I Conference and under United Nations mediation. The approved document proposes the start of a transition process only after Bashar al-Assad and his government have stepped down from power.
- On 18 December the Syrian opposition elects the former Prime Minister Riad Hijab with more than two-thirds of the vote as its representative in the peace process that will begin in January 2016 in Geneva.
- On 18 December the UN Security Council unanimously approves the resolution that establishes the roadmap that the peace process in Syria must follow.
- On 23 December Russia reports it has carried out a total of 302 airstrikes on 1,093 Daesh targets in Syrian territory since 18 December.

### Lebanon

- On 1 December the al-Nusra Front hands 16 soldiers and police officers

abducted in August 2014 over to Lebanon in exchange for 13 prisoners, including Saja Dulaimi, the ex-wife of Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

- On 17 December the former Lebanese deputy Hassan Yacoub, son of Sheikh Mohammad Yacoub, who disappeared in Libya in 1978, is arrested charged with being involved with the kidnapping of Hannibal Gaddafi, the son of the Libyan dictator Muammar el-Gaddafi. After the arrests his supporters cut off several roads in Baalbek.
- On 18 December the army fends off an attack by the al-Nusra Front on Arsal, two days after defending against a Daesh attack in Khirbet Daoud.
- On 18 December the lawmaker Suleiman Franjeh, personal friend of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, announces his candidacy to the Lebanese presidency, which has been vacant for more than 18 months.
- On 22 December the government approves the export of garbage from the country to try to put an end to the Garbage Crisis, which has triggered a wave of anti-government protests throughout the year.

### Jordan

- On 8 December UNHCR calls on Jordan to allow entry to 12,000 Syrian refugees stranded on the border.

### Egypt

- On 1-2 December the second round of the second phase of elections takes place for Egypt's new unicameral Parliament. On 4 December the election results, marked by an extremely low turnout at 28.3%, confirm the landslide victory of For the Love of Egypt, an alliance of parties that are supportive of the President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.
- On 4 December an Egyptian court repeals the death sentences given to Mohammed Badie, the Supreme Guide of the banned Muslim Brotherhood, and another eleven members of the organization accused of terrorism during the clashes that followed the dismantling of the Rabaa al-Adawiya Islamist camps in July 2013.

- On 29 December Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan sign the Khartoum Document under which they commit to keep trying for a definitive agreement on the Grand Renaissance Dam that Ethiopia has been building in the Blue Nile since 2011.

### Libya

- On 17 December the rival parliaments of Tobruk and Tripoli sign an agreement in the Moroccan town of Skhirat to establish a national unity government.
- On 17 December the general Khalifa Haftar, the army commander of the Tobruk government asks the UN to repeal the weapons embargo to advance in the fight against Daesh and other radical Islamist militias.
- On 27 December the Interior Ministry of the Tobruk government reports that Daesh now has around 5,000 militants in Libya, making the Mediterranean country the third target for the extension of the self-proclaimed caliphate, after Syria and Iraq.

### Tunisia

- On 2 December Rafik Chelly, National Security Minister is sacked a week after the Daesh suicide attack on a presidential guard bus. Chelly is replaced by Abderrahmane Haj Ali.
- On 9 December the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, – the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH), The Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA) and the National Bar Association – is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo for its decisive role in the Tunisian transition.
- On 21 December the EC announces an aid package of 112 million euros to help with socio-economic reforms in the southern neighbourhood, especially in Syria and Tunisia.

### Algeria

- On 11 December the Senate unanimously adopts the change to the Criminal Code to increase measures for protecting women against all forms of violence.

*Morocco*

- On 11 December Morocco issues an arrest warrant against Salah Abdeslam, suspected of taking part in the attacks in Paris on 12 November.
- On 14 December the EU announces that pace of reforms in the area of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Morocco has slowed down during 2015.

*EU*

- On 17-18 December the European Council agrees to continue its work to bring about the capital markets union, the energy union and digital market union, and to strengthen the fight against terrorism. With regard to the question of the United Kingdom remaining in the Union, it commits to seeking an agreement in the Council on 17-18 February, 2016.
- On 21 December 1,005,504 refugees and migrants have arrived in Europe in 2015 according to the most recent data of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

**Gibraltar**

- On 12 June the Spanish government approves the closure of the Cervantes Institute in Gibraltar, created in 2011 as a result of the Tripartite Forum overseen by the previous government of Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, claiming that it makes no sense to have an institution dedicated to the promotion of the Spanish language abroad in a place that Spain sees as its own territory and where everyone already speaks Spanish.
- On 3 August the EC begins formal infringement proceedings against the United Kingdom for its alleged violation of the Habitats Directive on the conservation of ecosystems in Britain's Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), two of which affect Gibraltar.
- On 27 November Gibraltar holds a general election won by the centre-left coalition of the Socialist Labour Party and Liberal Party (GSLP-LPG), led by

the Chief Minister Fabian Picardo, with 68.03% of the votes.

**Western Sahara**

- On 29 January Morocco lifts its veto on the work of UN staff in the Western Sahara after it is confirmed that the monitoring of human rights in the area will not form part of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).
- On 10 March a report from the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) reveals that a large part of the humanitarian aid sent between 2003 and 2007 by the EU and other international organisms to Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps in Algeria, ends up being sold in Algerian, Mauritanian and Malian markets.
- On 9 April the judge at the Spanish High Court Pablo Ruz tries eight military leaders and three Moroccan civilians suspected of taking part in the large-scale, systematic killing of Sahrawis between 1976 and 1991.
- On 28 April the United Nations Security Council unanimously decides to extend the mandate of MINURSO.
- On 4 October, according to sources from the Moroccan State, around 40,000 people demonstrate outside the Swedish embassy in Rabat called by the government to protest against the plans of the Swedish Parliament to recognize the Western Sahara as an independent state. In addition to the demonstration is the campaign to boycott Swedish products and companies in Morocco announced on 2 October by the Communications Minister Mustapha Khalfi, which comes three days after the cancellation of the opening of a new store of the Swedish company Ikea in Casablanca.
- On 14 December the EU Foreign Ministers decide to appeal the ruling made by the EU's General Court, which, on 10 December, annulled the application of the Agricultural and Fishery trade agreement concluded in 2012 with Morocco on the grounds that it should not apply to the Western Sahara.

**Sources***ABC**Affaires Stratégiques – IFRI**AffarInternazionali – IAI**Agence France Presse**Agencia EFE**Al-Ahram**Al-Jazeera**Al-Monitor**Al-Masry al-Youm**ANSAMED**Associated Press**BBC**Balkan Insight**Carnegie Endowment for International Peace**Chatham House**Council of Foreign Affairs**DiploWeb**Election Guide – IFES**El Mundo**El País**Europa Press**Europe Media Monitor**Foreign Affairs**Foreign Policy**Haaretz**Il Corriere della Sera**International Crisis Group**Jeune Afrique**Le Figaro**Le Monde**Le monde diplomatique**Limes – La Repubblica**L'Orient Le Jour**Magharebia**MEMRI**Middle East Institute**Oasis**Osservatorio balcani e Caucaso**Politico**Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty**Radio Televisión Española**Real Instituto Elcano**Reuters**Robert Schuman Stiftung**SwissInfo**SWP**The Guardian**The Huffington Post**The New York Times**The Telegraph**The Washington Post**Transconflict**Tunisia Live*